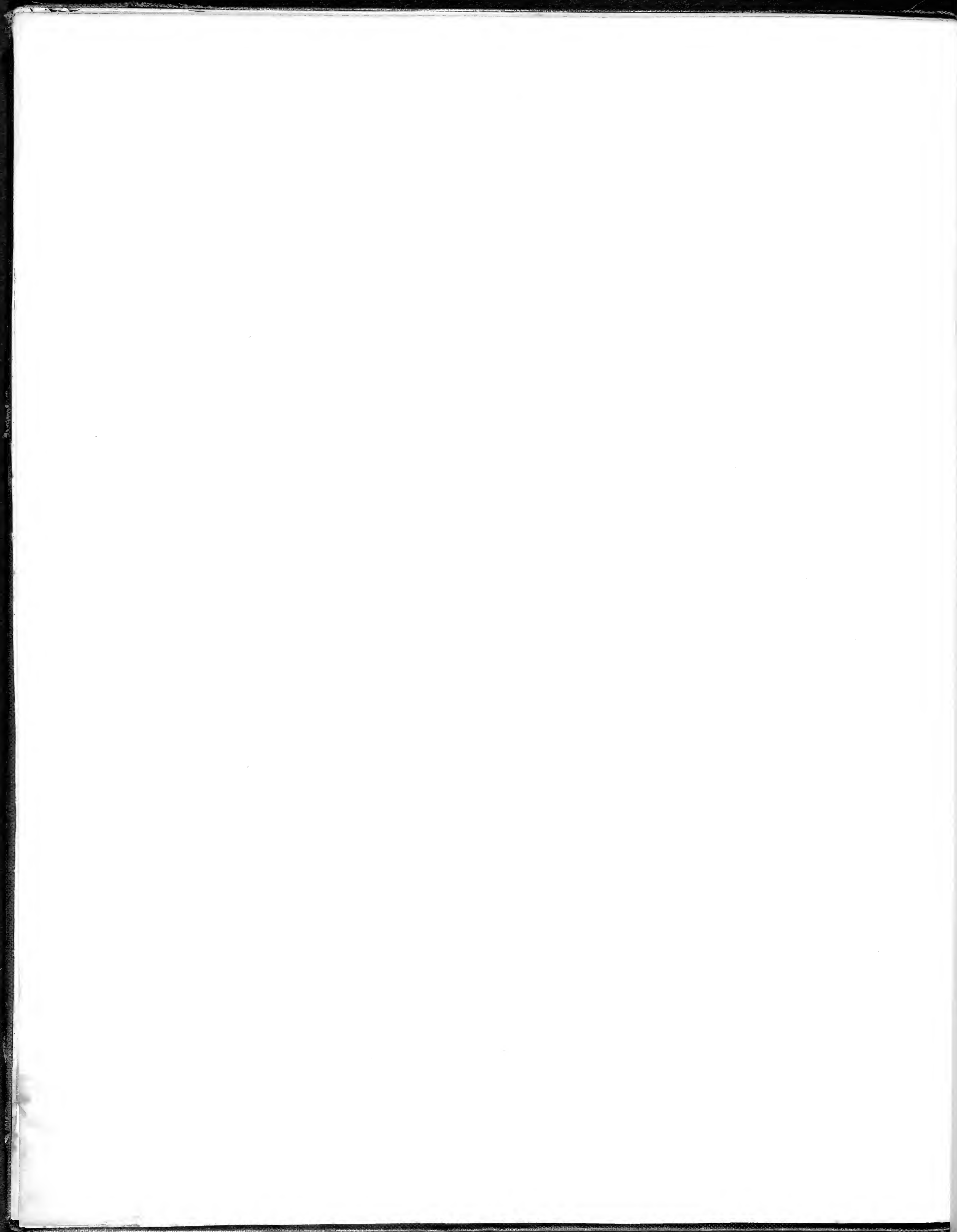


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BRITISH DEER AND THEIR HORNS



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A Highland Black-headed Gullery.

BRITISH DEER

AND THEIR HORNS

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BY

JOHN GUILLE MILLAIS, F.Z.S., ETC.

AUTHOR OF 'GAME BIRDS AND SHOOTING SKETCHES,' 'A BREATH FROM THE VELDT,' ETC.

WITH

185 TEXT AND FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

MOSTLY BY

THE AUTHOR

8 from Drawings by Mr. SIDNEY STEEL, 2 by E. ROE, and Photographs.

Also 10 Electrogravures and a Coloured Frontispiece by the AUTHOR

and SIDNEY STEEL, and a series of unpublished Sketches by

Sir EDWIN LANDSEER which were formerly on the

walls of Ardverikie

LONDON

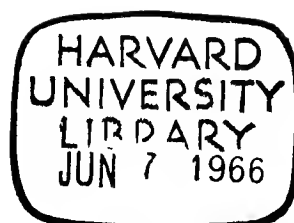
HENRY SOTHERAN AND CO.

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1897

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DEDICATED
TO
MY FRIEND
CHARLES LUCAS, ESQUIRE
OF
WARNHAM

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PREFACE

DEER-STALKERS hardly ever read a book on stalking, yet there is scarcely one who is not pleased to look at pictures of his favourite form of the chase and follow the adventures of a brother-sportsman. In order to avoid criticism it is usual to address one's work to the *veriest tyro*, but that individual is now nearly extinct, and only to be found in the columns of the sporting papers where he writes about the deterioration of Scottish antlers. I therefore boldly address my work to experienced sportsmen and naturalists, though personally aware of its shortcomings. The genuine expert is ever the most kind in his criticism, well knowing the many difficulties which have to be overcome in representing the wild life as it really is.

Not a single word that is new has been written about stalking since Mr. Grimble published his excellent work on the subject seven or eight years ago, though many have been over the same old threshed-out ground. At the same time, it has always struck me that there never has been a good standard work on British animals embracing the subject from every point of view. In the hope, therefore, of supplying a complete life-history of our three most interesting mammals have I undertaken this work, with special attention to the roe, an animal that has never received proper consideration at the hands of either sportsman or naturalist.

The series of the best British deer heads has involved much labour and travelling; for, with one or two exceptions, I have personally seen and measured all the heads that are figured or mentioned in the work; so that I may claim that such a collection is here brought together

for the first time, measured to the same scale, and criticised from an absolutely unbiassed point of view.

Not the least difficult part of this work is to thank all the kind friends who have so generously helped me, many having gone out of their way to obtain photos, pictures, or information of some particular head which they thought might be of use. Especially are my thanks due to Mr. Charlie Lucas of Warnham Court, who has done everything he could to help me in the study of park deer, and to Sir Edmund Loder, who, in addition to his valuable criticism, has given me every facility for working in his splendid museum and library. These two friends have done much to make part of a somewhat difficult task most pleasant, and I fear I can but inadequately express my thanks to them here. My sincere thanks are also due to the Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Portland, the Marquis of Breadalbane, the Earl of Ilchester, Lord Castletown, Lord Powerscourt, Sir Henry Gore Booth, Sir George Macpherson Grant, Sir Douglas Brooke, Sir Arthur Grant of Monymusk, and Mr. J. E. Harting, who have all helped me considerably in my chapters on heads.

The Duke of Athole, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, Lord Tweedmouth, the Hon. Walter Rothschild, Colonel Gordon-Cumming (Forres House), Colonel M'Inroy, the Hon. G. Lascelles, Mr. J. Grant of Glenmoriston, Mr. Ralph Sneyd, Mr. Dan Cooper, Mr. John Hargreaves, Mr. E. Hartert, and Mr. Sidney Loder have also given me permission to draw from their collections, or have kindly sent me photographs and notes. Mr. H. Snowie has shown me all his photographs of good heads of the past, and perhaps no one has taken greater trouble in rendering me every assistance, extending over several years, than Mr. William Macleay of Inverness.

My father-in-law, Mr. P. G. Skipwith, has most kindly revised the first half of this book, but when he got to Chapter V. his emotion overcame him, and he skipped off to New Zealand one fine morning to spend Christmas with his boys. Anyway, I have felt it bitterly, as I have had to do all the rest myself, and I never could read my own handwriting.

So as to give the stalker true landscapes of Highland forests, and some that he may, perchance, recognise as old hunting-grounds, I have, in the larger pictures, had the able assistance of Mr. Sidney Steel of Perth.

He has spared no pains to help me, and I leave his work to speak for itself. He has also done four of the roe black and whites and three of the red deer.

The happiest recollections that the stalker cherishes are certainly those of scenes and incidents, the poetry of which has been so perfectly expressed in the pictures of Sir Edwin Landseer. The naturalist, on the other hand, although he too may equally be influenced by the same considerations, is a grim realist, and will have, as a rule, naught but what actually exists to the cold scientific eye. No doubt the latter is right, horribly right, but then we cannot exist without the healthy sentiment of the other. All the artist can do is to maintain his own individuality and reconcile as far as possible the feelings and interests of both.

J. G. MILLAIS.

HORSHAM, *May* 1897.



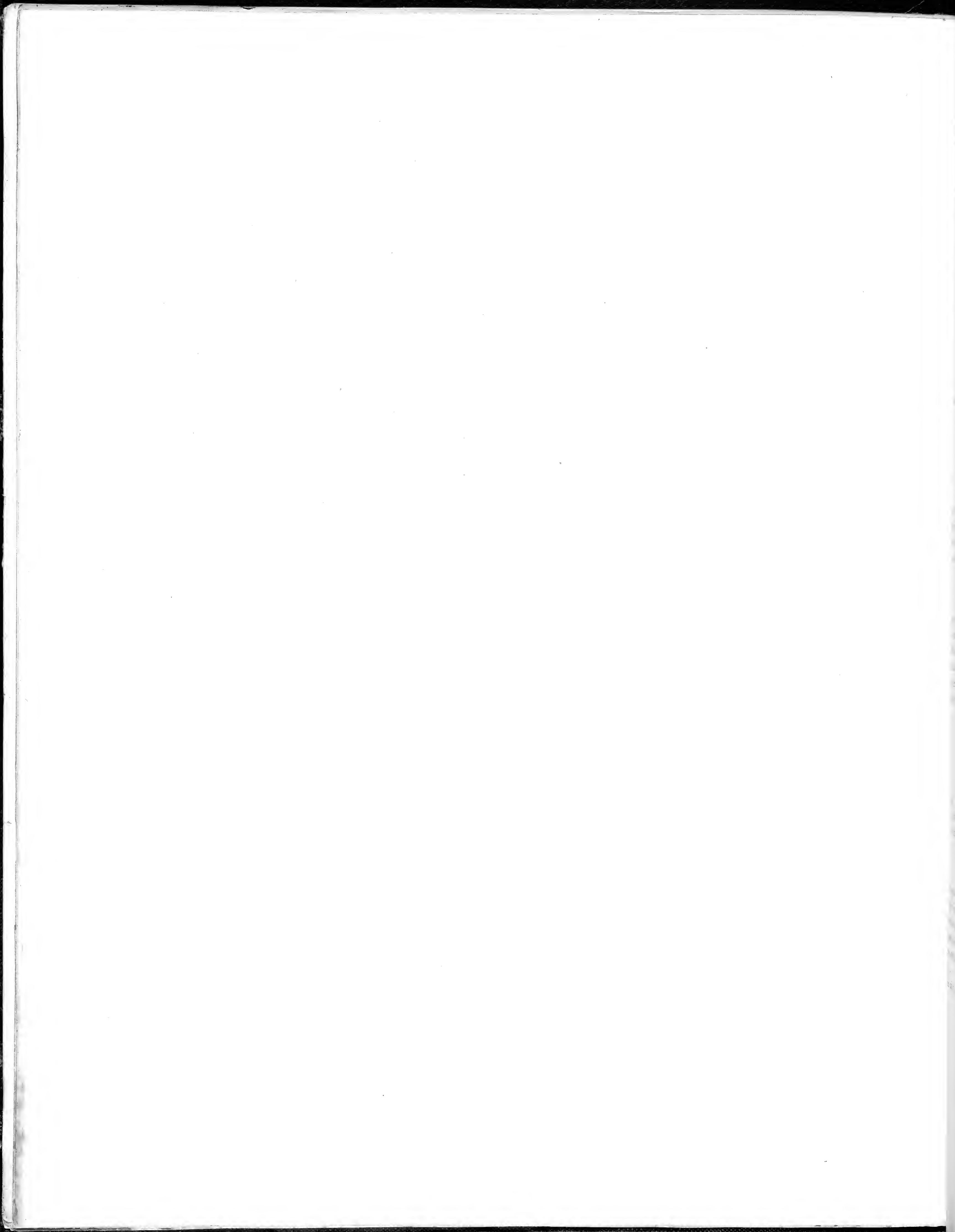
Castlewella
Ireland
1882
Weight 26 stone.
Park head with fine span

FORM OF HORN DUE TO ENVIRONMENT (SEE PAGE 117)

Example of a park head grown by a stag living on an open heather-covered mountain with but little wood shelter at the base. Span, 42 inches. Owner, the Earl of Annesley.

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British Deer and their Horns

CHAPTER I

EXTINCT BRITISH DEER

EVEN in these education-made-easy days Palaeontology is hardly a word to conjure with. It is too much of a mouthful for most people, and in point of sound it has not even the charm that a pious old lady is said to have found in "that blessed word Mesopotamia." Then as to the science itself, some of us may perhaps think we had enough of it in early youth when periodically dragged by a tutor through the dingy recesses of the old British Museum in Russell Street, and then and there crammed with more learning than we could digest about the marvellous creatures of the Pliocene and Pleistocene ages. Be that as it may, I must touch upon the subject in these pages, though only—as I hasten to assure the timid reader—in the most cursory and perfunctory fashion. Indeed it would be an impertinence on my part to attempt anything more than this, since the whole subject has been exhaustively dealt with by some of our more eminent scientists, notably Professor Owen and Professor Boyd Dawkins.

And now I must mention the various species of deer which have been named from the fossil remains of their bones and horns, and denoting at the same time the localities in which they were discovered. They are, Pliocene : (1) extinct British elk (*Alces latifrons*), loc. Norfolk and Suffolk forest beds ; (2) Dawkins's deer (*Cervus Dawkinsi*), loc. Norfolk and Suffolk forest beds ; (3) Savin's deer (*Cervus Savini*), loc. Norfolk forest bed ; (4) *Cervus verticornis*, loc. forest bed, Lowestoft ; (5) *Cervus polignacus*, loc. forest bed, Mundesly, Norfolk ; (6) Sedgwick's deer (*Cervus Sedgwickii*), loc. forest bed, Bacton, Norfolk ; (7) Buckland's fossil deer (*Cervus Bucklandi*), loc. Kirkdale ; (8) Brown's deer (*Cervus Browni*), loc. Clacton, Essex ; and Pleistocene : (9) gigantic round-antlered deer (*Strongyloceros spelaeus*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), loc. England, Scotland, and Ireland ; (10) gigantic Irish deer (*Megaceros hibernicus*), loc. England, Scotland, and Ireland ; (11) reindeer (*Tarandus rangifer*), loc. England, Scotland, and Ireland ; and roe (*Capreolus caprea*).

Some idea of the forms which the horns of these deer presented may be gathered from the accompanying illustrations and measurements, to which only a few words need be added.

EXTINCT BRITISH ELK (*Alces latifrons*).—This deer, which closely resembles the elk still found in Europe, is said by Professor Boyd Dawkins to have inhabited Norfolk and the great valley between that county and Norway which was eventually covered by the glacial sea.

British Deer and their Horns

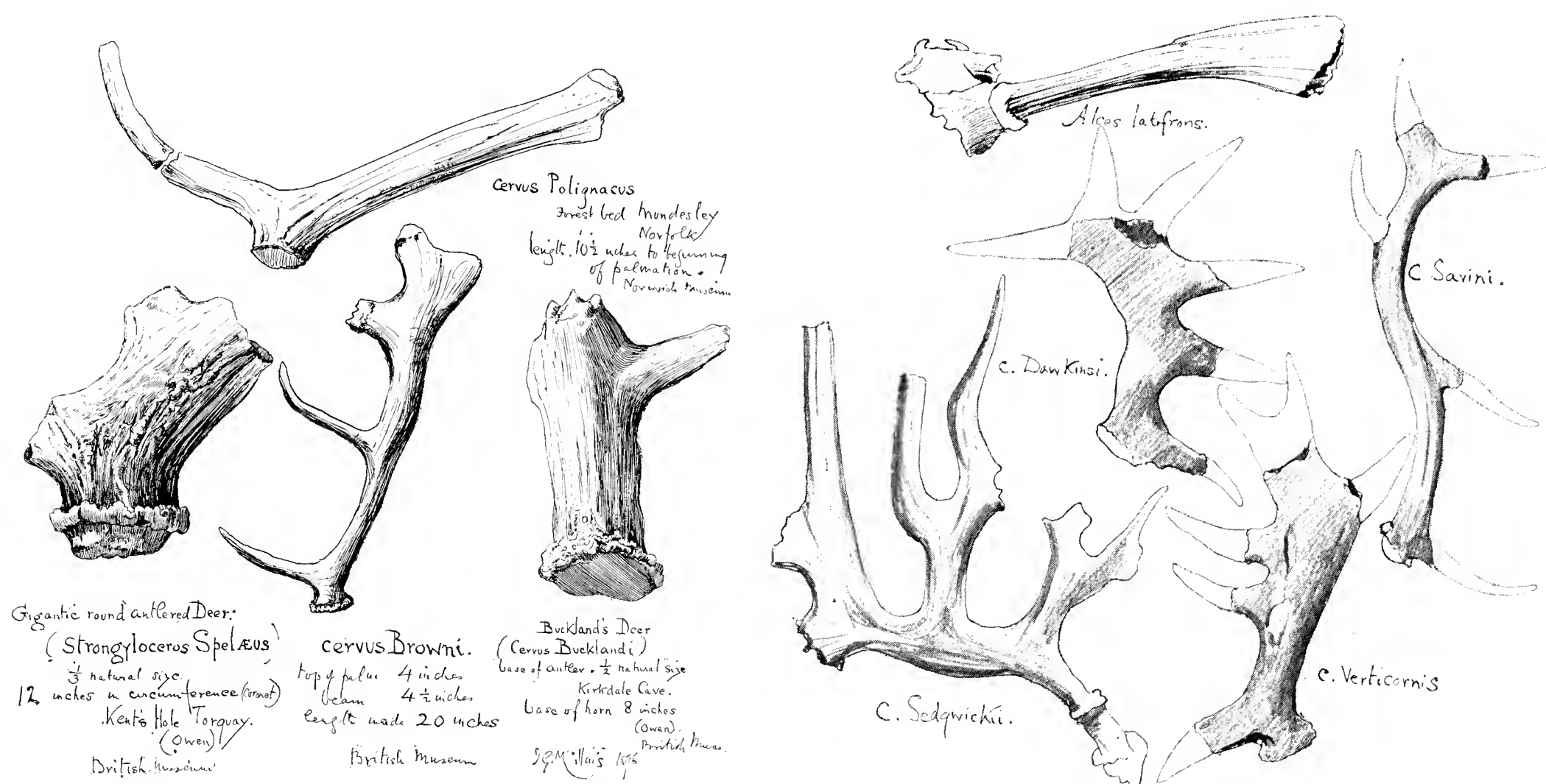
In the British Museum there is a splendid piece of horn of this species which was dredged from the Dogger Bank in the North Sea.

DAWKINS'S DEER (*Cervus Dawkinsi*).—A deer with a palmated antler, whose type seems to approach that of the elk family.

SAVIN'S DEER (*Cervus Savini*).—A large deer resembling the red deer.

CERVUS VERTICORNIS.—Another large deer whose horns resemble those of the red deer, except that in adult animals the horns become more palmated and thicker and are apt to throw off tines at almost any point of the anterior or posterior margin of the beam.

CERVUS POLIGNACUS.—Another large deer with a long brow point, whose beam spreads into palmation, like that of the fallow deer, about $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the base.



SEDGWICK'S DEER (*Cervus Sedgwickii*).—See illustration, which suggests a form of deer whose representatives are no longer found in Europe.

BUCKLAND'S FOSSIL DEER (*Cervus Bucklandi*).—This species of deer, about the size of the reindeer, but differing from all known existing species in Europe, was first described by Dr. Buckland, the geologist, from the remains found in the cave of Kirkdale, and was named after him by Sir Richard Owen. Its horns seem to have resembled those of the white-tailed and mule deer of North America in that the first point is situated at a distance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the base. Owen says, "Such a position of the first branch may be observed amongst existing deer in the great rusa or hippelaphus of India" (by which I presume the sambhur is meant), but that is certainly not the position of the first point in any of the rusa family. In their case it springs immediately in front and above the coronet, bending at once both outwards and upwards.

The foregoing species all flourished at a period of which it is difficult nowadays to give much trustworthy information of general interest. As, however, we come to the list of deer which inhabited these islands in later Pleistocene times, our information is far more extended and exact.

Indefatigable labourers in the field of science, such as Owen, Geikie, and others, have shown us in their interpretation of the earth's crust—an interpretation now universally accepted—that between the two great glacial periods there existed a warm “snap,” for what duration of time we know not, but the presumption is that it lasted many thousands of years.

During this period the atmosphere over the greater part of Europe—even to the Arctic Regions—must have been throughout the year equable, and perhaps even warm, since we have abundant evidence that certain plants and trees then existed which are naturally associated with southern latitudes. Remains of palm-trees have been found so far north as Greenland, whilst in Great Britain the luxuriance of the foliage is clearly indicative of a semi-tropical climate. This interesting age, with its abundance of animal and vegetable life, is all the more wonderful because it followed an epoch of Arctic barrenness and desolation.

The intense cold of the first glacial period was due (as Hugh Miller tells us) to the action of immense glaciers which passed over a large portion of Northern Europe and America, “scoring the rocks in their track, planing down the surface of the land in some places, and scooping out hollows in others which afterwards formed great lakes.” To-day this is shown in the *lower boulder* clay, above which is the clay or shell-marl, in which evidence of the temperate or interglacial period is abundantly found.

It is at this time of “sands and gravels” that the mighty creatures of the earth roamed through Europe and the Americas, our own islands being especially favoured. The Siberian mammoth ranged across Northern Europe, the mastodon in North America, the megatherion and mylodon in South America, great kangaroos in Australia, and moas in New Zealand; while the mammoth, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, cave bear, lion, hyena, wolf, and gigantic Irish deer roamed at large in England. There are also certain proofs that palaeolithic man existed in England and on the Continent, though not in Ireland, where megaceros seems to have been the only representative of the great mammals.

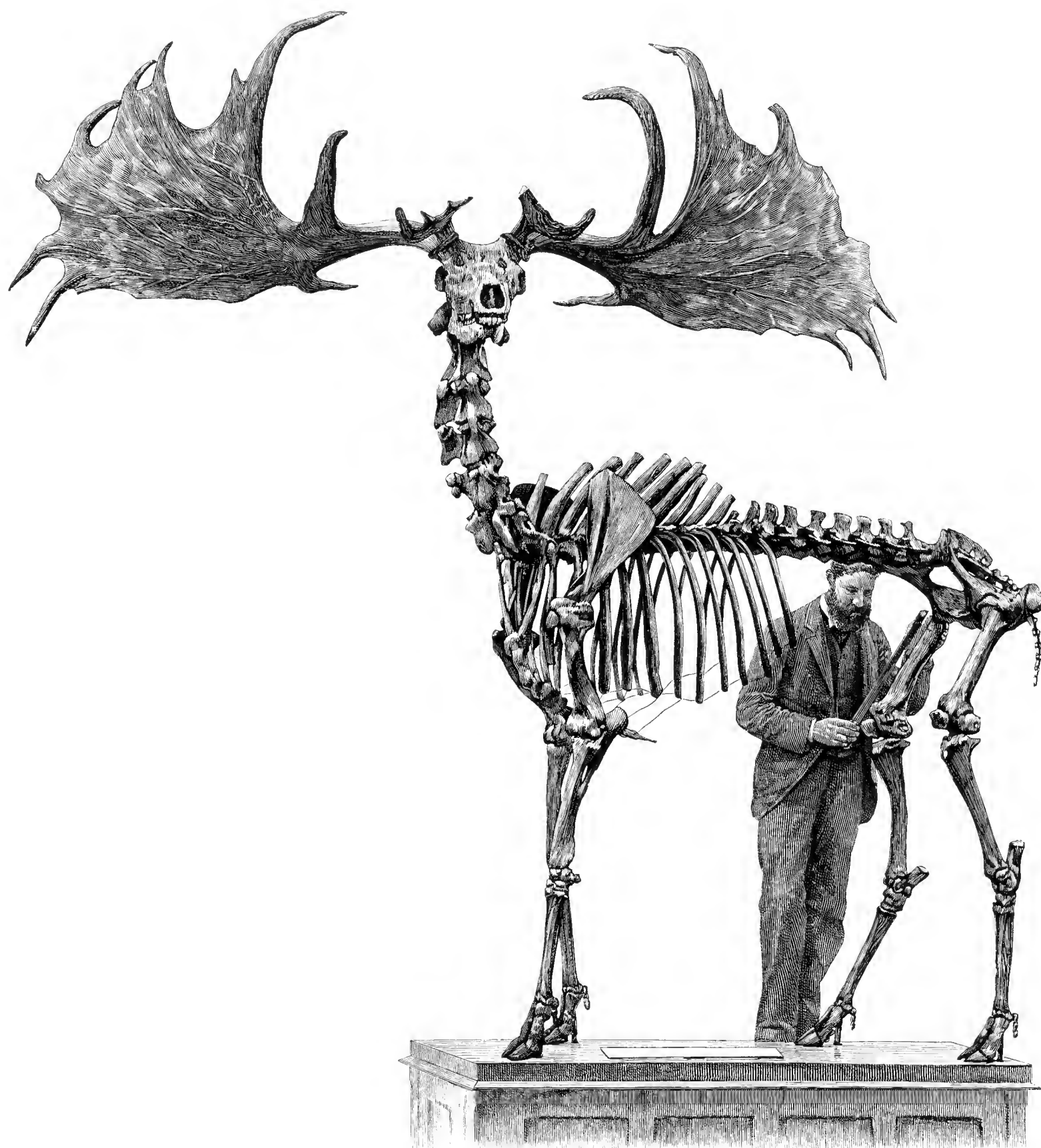
I must not, however, go further into the history of these great creatures, but confine myself to the *Cervidae* which inhabited our islands at this period. These are as follows: (1) Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and gigantic round-antlered deer (*Strongyloceros spelaeus*), (2) Brown's deer (*Cervus Browni*), (3) Gigantic Irish deer (*Megaceros hibernicus*), (4) Roebuck (*Cervus capreolus*), (5) Reindeer (*Tarandus rangifer*).

With the exception of the red deer and the roe, all these species are now extinct, but there is reason to suppose that the reindeer survived in Caithness till the middle of the twelfth century. The red deer and the roe are discussed at length later on. In this chapter I shall deal mainly with those no longer existing in our islands.

[RED DEER (*Cervus elaphus*) and GIGANTIC ROUND-ANTLERED DEER (*Strongyloceros spelaeus*).—In Great Britain the red deer, next to the reindeer, seems to have been the commonest. Some of the earliest examples of horns of this species might lead us to suppose that another great animal akin to the prehistoric wapiti of America existed in these islands. From two splendid fragments of horns and a piece of lower jaw from Kent's Hole, Torquay, Owen evolved a species which he calls “the gigantic round-antlered deer (*Strongyloceros spelaeus*),” but I do not for a moment think that this will hold good. The measurement which he gives of the base of the best of these two pieces of horns (now in the British Museum) is 15 inches—a circumference which would certainly signify something beyond past or present

British Deer and their Horns

elaphus ; but, as a matter of fact, the horn measures nothing like this, nor even when the coronet is measured and all allowance is given for its irregularities do we get the tape to show more than 12 inches—certainly a good figure, but by no means abnormal for a German red deer of to-day. Many of the horns, too, found at Ilford and elsewhere approach so



COMPLETE SKELETON OF THE GIGANTIC IRISH DEER

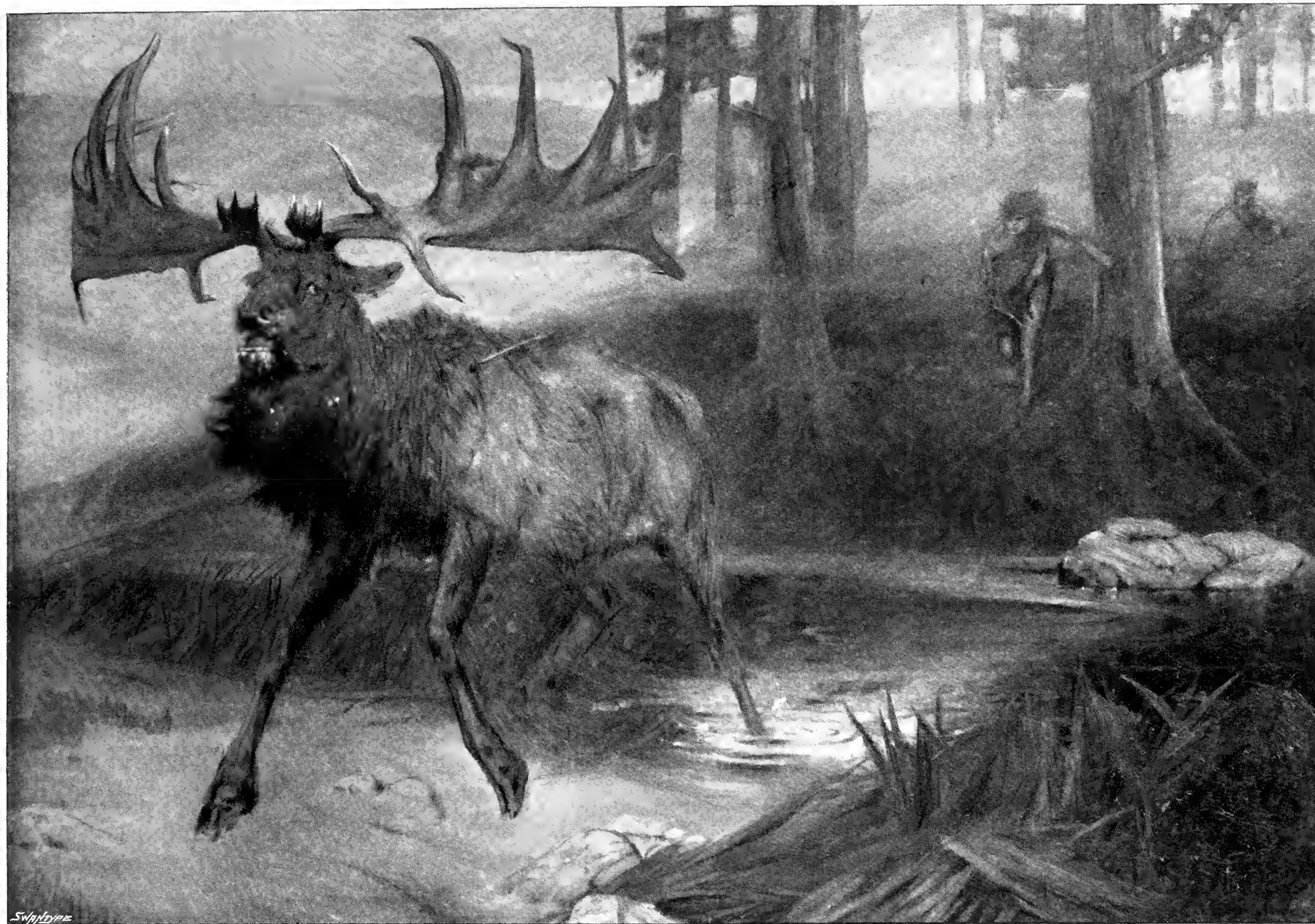
From the specimen in Sir Edmund Loder's museum at Leonardslee. The owner, a man of 6 feet 1 inch, is seen behind the figure of the animal, and gives the reader some idea of the grand proportions of this great deer.

closely to the Kent Hole specimens that it seems absurd to make a new species upon such slender evidence.]

BROWN'S DEER (*Cervus Browni*).—Although this species may fairly be regarded as the original form in which *Cervus Dama* (the fallow deer) inhabited our islands, most authorities do not recognise it as a distinct species. It has, however, a much better claim than that of *Strongyloceros spelaeus*. The back point, which is a constant tine in the horn of an adult fallow buck, is in this case missing. If the reader will go to the British Museum and study carefully the two horns in the fossil gallery, he will see that in neither of them is there

a back point at the commencement of the palmation.¹ One horn seems to be that of an adult animal, and there is quite enough of the palm still preserved to show such a point, had it ever existed in the posterior ridge. The brow and the bay points are remarkably fine, and seem to indicate that the animals of this species were much larger than the *Cervus Dama* of to-day.

GIGANTIC IRISH DEER (*Megaceros hibernicus*).—It is impossible for any of us who are sportsmen and naturalists to look upon the complete skeleton of this truly magnificent stag without being impressed with the artistic beauty of its lines and the general grace which we naturally imagine must have belonged to its complete form. Dr. Molyneux was the



ANCIENT BRITONS HUNTING THE MEGACEROS

first to describe the gigantic Irish deer, and, judging from the one skull and palmated antlers which were all he possessed, he made the mistake of confounding it with the American moose. To-day, however, hundreds of the heads and a few good skeletons are in existence to prove how erroneous his conclusion was ; indeed, it was little short of an insult to this splendid and graceful creature to mistake him for the clumsy and mysterious elk. Camper was the first to call attention to this error and show how widely the skulls of the two animals differed, the elk having a prehensile upper lip and an unusual elongation of the intermaxillaries and nasal apertures, whilst the shape of the megaceros conforms to that of the ordinary deer.

¹ In Chapter VIII. this question of the constancy of the back point in fallow deer is examined. My observations in the case of wild fallow deer of to-day in this country, and in past and present Asiatic forms, tend to show that the back tine is as often absent as present.

From the large number of heads that have been dug up in Ireland alone, we conclude that the species must have been very abundant in later Pleistocene and prehistoric times. This is easily accounted for in the case of Ireland from the fact that (with the exception of wolves) it can have had scarcely any natural enemies amongst the larger carnivora, and in England, Scotland, and Western Europe it is doubtful if creatures like the great cave tiger and the cave bear could be considered formidable enemies when the question of speed is taken into consideration.

As before remarked, the gigantic Irish deer lived in the warm interglacial period, and the extraordinary annual growth of antler attests to the luxuriance and abundance of pasturage in those times. In the British Isles the deer seem to have been most numerous in Ireland, where remains are found below all the bogs in the lacustrine shell-marl. In County Limerick the greatest number of heads has been dug up, notably in the extinct lake of Loch Gur, where literally hundreds of them have been unearthed. In 1875 Mr. R. J. Moss made excavations in the bog of Ballybethag, nine miles south-east of Dublin, and was so successful that Mr. W. Williams, the Dublin naturalist, was induced to make similar researches in the same locality during the summers of 1876 and 1877. He too was equally fortunate, twenty-six heads and three complete skeletons being the result of his digging. From that date to the present time no one has been so successful as Mr. Williams in recovering the heads and horns of this great deer, and I think it is not too much to say that the vast majority of the specimens now in British collections owe their presence there to this indefatigable searcher. Below the great bog in the vicinity of Tullamore is another productive district, as is also the margin of Loch Derg (County Galway) and Killowen (County Wexford).

The first tolerably perfect skeleton of the megaceros was found in the Isle of Man, and was presented by the Duke of Atholl to the Edinburgh Museum.

In England the remains of this great deer are rare. Owen tells us that the first skull and antlers were dug out of the peat moss at Cowthorpe in Yorkshire. There are also evidences of its having existed at Walton in Essex and Hillgay in Norfolk and in the peat bogs of Lancashire; whilst complete heads and antlers have recently been found in the south-west of Scotland. Lartet, the French naturalist, observes that the habitat of this animal seems to have been much more contracted than that of the mammoth, and he tells us that its remains are found in France westward only to the foot of the Pyrenees. In the valley of the Oise, M. L'Abbé Ed. Lambert has found it associated with *Elaphus primigenius*, *Rhinoceros tichorhinus*, hippopotamus, reindeer, and musk ox.

In Germany the remains have been found as far east as Silesia, and the caves of the Altai denote the extreme eastern limit of the ascertained range of this animal.

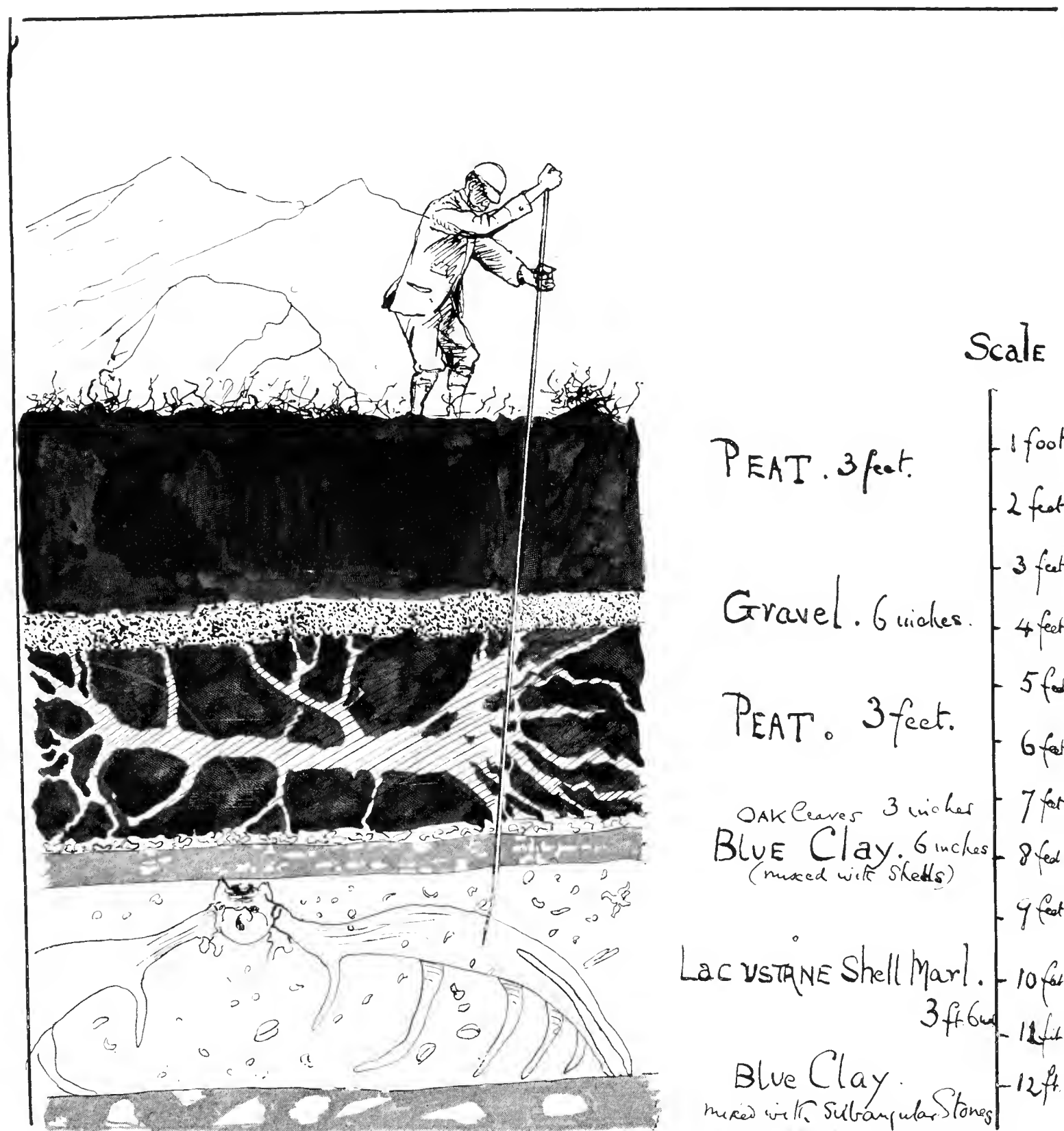
Most of the heads are found at a depth of from 5 to 9 feet—not in the peat itself, as is generally supposed, but in the shell-marl. Professor Ball, in his description of the Fossil Mammalia of Ireland, tells us that they have been recovered from the shell-marl under 50 feet of peat.

Their position is generally ascertained by means of probing irons, which are forced into the earth until the position of the head and antlers is discovered. The profession of the man who has been employed by Mr. Williams to search for them is probably unique. By

Extinct British Deer

7

constant practice he is enabled to tell from the ring of the metal exactly what kind of substance the rod has come into contact with. A different sound is emitted when a stone, bone, or horn is struck, and, I am told, so delicate is this expert's hearing that he can tell whether it is the horn of a large or small animal. Writing to me on this subject, Mr. Williams says: "The man who searches for the megaceros heads uses a rod about 60 feet in length. First of all he takes a survey of the bog, and from long experience knows where to commence his probing in what seems a likely spot. Should the iron strike stone



SHOWING MODE OF FINDING THE HEADS, THEIR POSITION, AND THE STRATA IN WHICH THEY ARE GENERALLY EMBEDDED

or gravel, he knows by the gritty feel, whilst horn gives a dull thud, and by turning the rod round and round the searcher is able to tell of what nature is the substance he has struck. Many a time a day's digging only produces a head not worth lifting, owing to its being broken in many pieces, or perhaps it is only a dropped antler."

The coexistence of prehistoric man with this animal is an interesting point of discussion. In Ireland there is no certain proof of their having lived at the same time, though in 1862 Mr. J. R. Usher brought forward strong evidence that such was the case by exhibiting before the Dublin Geological Society long bones of the gigantic Irish deer

split as though for the extraction of marrow, and stone implements which have been found in conjunction with them in the caves of Ballynamintra, near Cappagh, County Waterford.

Dr. Hart, of the Dublin Society, also cites the fact of the discovery of a human body in gravel under 11 feet of peat. It was in good preservation and completely clothed in antique garments of hair, which it was conjectured might be that of our fossil mammal. He also in his Memoir gives a picture of a perforated rib of a megaceros, the hole in which was supposed to have been made by an arrow. Both these arguments Sir Richard Owen discusses, and gives good reasons for his rejection of them.

On the Continent, however, a skull has been figured by Cuvier which was found when cutting the Canal de l'Ourcq, in company with the tusks of *Elaphus primigenius* and bones of the aurochs which bore marks of the weapons of man.

In the Journal of the Geological Society (May 1860) Lartet states that at Aurignan the remains of this deer had evidently served for the food of man; whilst in the *Geologist* (No. 42), 1861, there is an account of a work by Admiral Wauchoppe in which he says that he had seen a stone hammer buried in the head of an Irish elk, and other skulls that had been similarly perforated.

The next point to be considered is the cause or causes which led to the extinction of these great creatures. The bed of clay which covers the remains was evidently Arctic in its character, and it is believed by many that the severe climate, by destroying the supply of food, killed off these animals as well as the other large mammalia. Dr. Geikie, our great authority on the glacial period, is of this opinion, and Wallace, in his interesting *Geographical Distribution of Animals* (vol. i. page 150), gives us the following note:—

“We live in a zoologically impoverished world, from which all the hugest and fiercest and strangest forms have disappeared; yet it is a marvellous fact, and one that has hardly been sufficiently dwelt upon, this sudden dying out of so many large mammalia, not in one place only, but over half the land surface of the globe. We can but believe that there must have been some physical cause for this great change; and it must have been a cause capable of acting simultaneously over large portions of the earth's surface, and one which, as far as the Tertiary period is concerned, was of an exceptional character. Such a cause exists in the great and recent physical change known as the second glacial epoch. We have proof, in both Europe and North America, that just about the time these large animals were disappearing, all the northern parts of these continents were wrapped in a mantle of ice.” Many eminent geologists, however, differ from this view and assign a post-glacial date to our brick-earths, river-gravels, and cavern deposits.

In an interesting paper read before the Royal Dublin Society in March 1878, Mr. W. Williams leads us to believe that the death of the animals was due to their being driven down the slopes of the lakes (which in the case of Ballybethag was 45 degrees), where they became mired in the adhesive clay, and that their carcasses becoming loose after death, they eventually floated off (probably driven by some storm), leaving the heads anchored, with palate to the skies, in the sands and gravels.

Discussing this point recently with Mr. Williams, I gathered from him that, as the result of further investigations since his paper was written, he is more and more confident that his theory is correct. The heads he found in *Loch Gur* were nearly all upside down,

[illegible]

Right brow inter 17 to 14 = 9 in.
 Right brow length = 12 in.
 Right horn circumference of horn = 14 in.
 " " " circumference of horn at 00 = $9\frac{1}{4}$ in.
 " " " circumference of horn = $13\frac{3}{4}$ in.

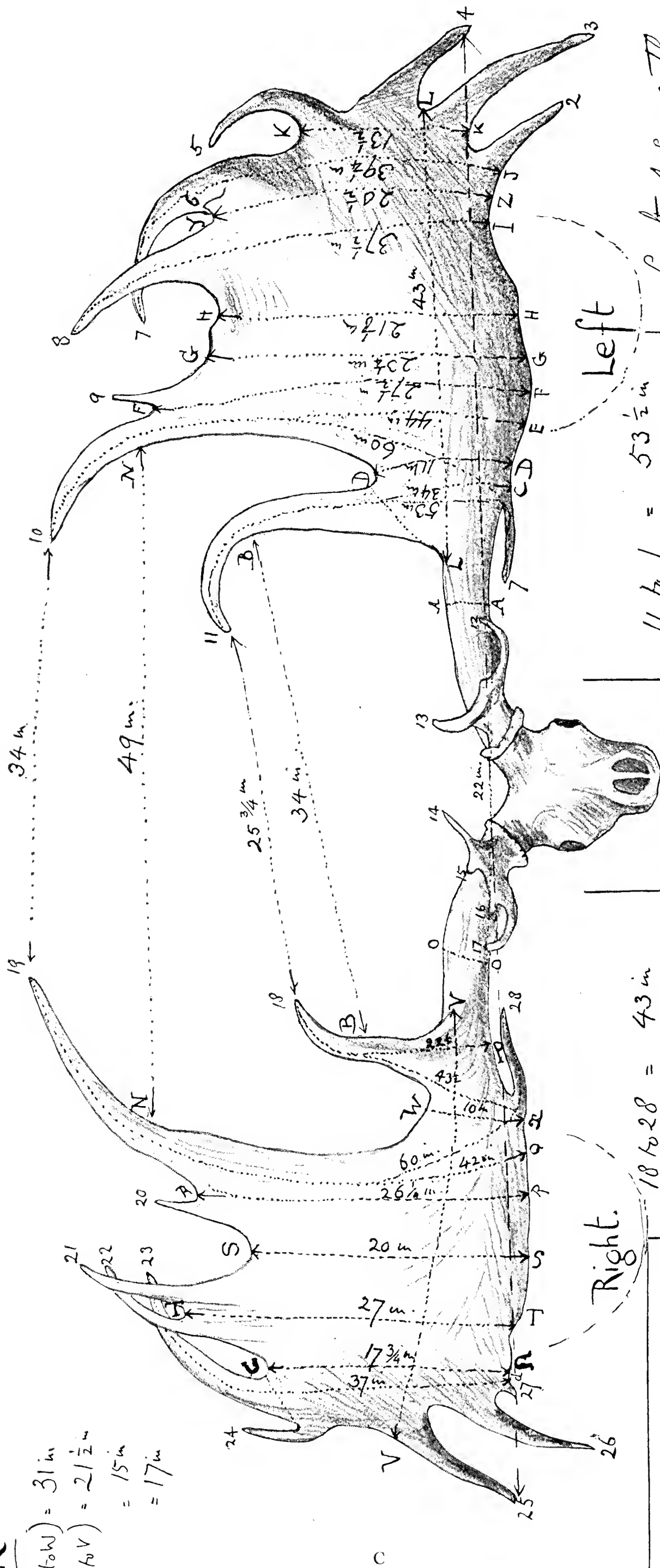
Tip to tip in a straight line	-----	4 to 25	= 9 ft. 5 in.
Tip to tip by head on part following the curve.	-----	5 to 23	= 12 ft. 10 in.
Tip to tip by head on back	-----	5 to 23	= 12 ft. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Point 19 (19 to W) = 31 in
Pt. 23 (20 to V) = 21 1/2 in
Pt. 25 = 15 in
Pt. 28 = 17 in

boat 1	$=$	$16\frac{1}{2}$ m
11 boat	$=$	33 m
10 boat	$=$	33 m
boat 7	$=$	22 m
boat 5	$=$	22 m

$$\frac{\text{pan}}{S}$$

25 to 4 = 9 ft. 5 in.



Right.

Left Bow anchor. 13 to K = 9 in
 " " Length = 13 in
 Left horn circumference of bow = $14\frac{1}{2}$ in
 " " Span at AA = $9\frac{1}{4}$ in
 " " first abutment = $13\frac{1}{2}$ in
 " " Length (5 to bow) = $6\frac{1}{4}$ in
 " " open to head $6\frac{1}{4}$ in
 Right horn. 21 to X = $33\frac{1}{2}$ in
 " " 28 to O = 34 in

$17 \text{ } ^{10}_{12} = 22 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$
 $14 \text{ } ^{10}_{13} = 35 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$
 $1 \text{ } ^{12}_{18} = 34 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$
B b B
 $18 \text{ } ^{10}_{11} = 25 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$
 $19 \text{ } ^{10}_{10} = 34 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$
 $N \text{ } ^{10}_{11} = 49 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$
 $14 \text{ } ^{10}_{13} = 47 \text{ } ^{14}_{12}$

11	h	1	$53\frac{1}{2}$ in
11	G	C	$= 34$ in
D	W	D	$= 11$ in
10	T	1	$= 60$ in
10	G	E	$= 44\frac{1}{2}$ in
F	F	F	$= 27\frac{1}{2}$ in
G	G	G	$= 23\frac{1}{4}$ in
H	G	H	$= 21\frac{1}{8}$ in
I	G	I	$= 37\frac{1}{2}$ in
J	G	J	$= 39\frac{1}{4}$ in
K	K	K	$= 13\frac{1}{2}$ in
L	G	L	$= 43$ in
Y	G	Z	$= 20\frac{1}{2}$ in

Length of sur-antler
11 to 12 = 26 u
• Skull between eye-orbits = 8.8 u
from end of premaxillaries to
Condyle = 19.75 u
from end of premaxillaries to
occipital ridge by curve with tail

Weight without lower jaw.
90 lbs.

W. H. A. S. del.

NOTE.—Many of my readers may possess heads of this great deer, and be anxious to compare their size with others. The above sketch of an exceptionally fine head, and showing all possible measurements, may be of some use to those who wish to ascertain the respective merits of their own specimens.

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and we can guess that any large animal, when floating (particularly one with so heavy a head as the beast in question), would naturally assume such a position in the water when decomposition set in.

There is no evidence that the megaceros survived the glacial period and existed within historic times. Neither Caesar, Pliny, nor Tacitus mentions such a creature.

And now as to the heads of these gigantic animals. Without going into a scientific explanation as to the precise form of antler annually thrown out, I may say that the horns most closely resemble those of its modern representative, the fallow buck, except that the points emanate from the anterior and terminal margin of the horns, instead of issuing from the posterior margin.

The weight of an adult megaceros head is about 70 lbs. Owen, however, gives the big head presented by Archdeacon Maunsell to the Royal Dublin Society as 87 lbs. avoirdupois, and there can be little doubt that, owing to the action of time, the horns themselves weigh somewhat less now than at the moment of the animal's death. How marvellous, then, must have been the physical strength of the creature that could throw out such a mass of osseous matter in the short period of four months, for the horn-growth of the megaceros doubtless followed the same rules as those which govern the horn-growth of other deer.

Very interesting is it to the naturalist to trace the horn-growth in deer from their earliest youth till they reach maturity and commence to decline; but, so far as I know, no one has thought it worth while to collect the whole series of this great deer's head. Owen gives examples of two immature horns, the first of which, supposing it to follow the course of the fallow buck, would seem to be that of an animal that has already shed its antlers twice, for the fallow buck does not grow the back point until the third pair is thrown out.

To this series of Sir Richard Owen's, in which he includes the fine Dublin head as an adult, I can now add figures of (1) a good example of abnormal bifurcation in the possession of the Dublin Museum, and (2) the head of what is apparently a very old animal going back. In the case of the latter the horns are not broken, as the reader may think at first glance, but are those of a beast which was seemingly too old to complete its full horn-growth. I have seen several such heads, but the present example (in the collection of Sir Edmund Loder at Leonardslee) is a remarkably fine one (p. 19).

Well, these heads are so huge and splendid that any man who is fortunate enough to possess a fair specimen may be forgiven for imagining it to be better than it really is. The average man sees but few of these heads, and it is only by inspecting a very large number, and constantly using the all-levelling tape, that an expert can pick out the one or two genuine monsters.

Some heads there are which on paper look extraordinary, one in Ireland spanning no less than 13 feet, but then to form a right judgment of a megaceros head we must take into consideration other points besides size in determining its claim to excellence.¹ In many of what would otherwise be first-class heads there is such a quantity of plaster, and so many pieces of "Nature's virgin forest," that they are at once placed out of the running.

¹ The 11 feet 6 inches head in the Dublin Museum, presented by the Marquis of Bath, is fearfully manufactured, and has no real claims to distinction in the matter of span.

British Deer and their Horns

There are probably no better examples in existence than the following :—

1. A head in the possession of the Duke of Westminster, obtained from Tullamore, Ireland. (2 illustrations.)
2. A head in the possession of Sir Edmund Loder. Obtained in County Limerick. (2 illustrations.)
3. A head in the Royal Dublin Society, presented by Archdeacon Maunsell. (Illustrated.)
4. A head in the possession of Lord Powerscourt.

All these heads are but little broken, and perfect examples of adult heads. The following are their correct measurements :—

	Spread (extreme)	Length round inside of Horn	Circumference above Brow	Palm	Points
The Duke of Westminster's big head	9 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.	Each horn 6 ft.	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.	25	22
Sir E. Loder's head	9 ft. 5 in.	Right horn 6 ft. 2 in.; left horn 6 ft. 1 in.	13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	22 $\frac{1}{8}$	28
Archdeacon Maunsell's head (Royal Dublin Society)	9 ft. 2 in.	Right horn (outside) 5 ft. 9 in.	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	22 $\frac{1}{4}$	22
Lord Powerscourt's head	9 ft. 5 in.	... ..	11 in.	20	

Lord Digby has the best collection that I have yet seen of first-class megaceros heads, at his country seat near Tullamore, Ireland. In the British Museum is a fine head (on skeleton) with a span of 10 feet 2 inches. In the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow there is also a good head having the right bay tine bifurcated like that of the big Dublin head, and there is a head with the fine span of 11 feet 3 inches at Kirkpatrick, County Kildare. Indeed, nearly every big country house in Cork or Limerick has a good example of this great extinct deer.

Sir Richard Owen's measurements of these heads cannot, I think, be accepted as correct, for, with all respect for his authority as an osteologist, one can hardly doubt that in this matter he must have relied greatly on hearsay. Take the big Dublin head, for instance; the 7 feet which he gives as the length of the horn could hardly be a slip of the pen for 5 feet 9 inches, which is the correct length. Nearly all his measurements are on this magnificent scale, though I do not doubt that where he took them himself they were done in perfect good faith and honesty.

Few men measure horns exactly in the same way, even when any standard is accepted, but in the heads here referred to the exaggeration of Owen's figures is only too manifest. He states also that the palm sometimes attains a breadth of 3 feet, which is far in excess of anything yet known. The Knole specimen, to which he so eulogistically refers, is, in fact, a very ordinary one.

Owen, however, has given us the first really scientific and well-illustrated explanation of this grand creature, and we are all very grateful to him in consequence. Well do I remember going to the old British Museum with my mother some twenty years ago, when the great scientist showed us round with his usual courtesy and made things generally so

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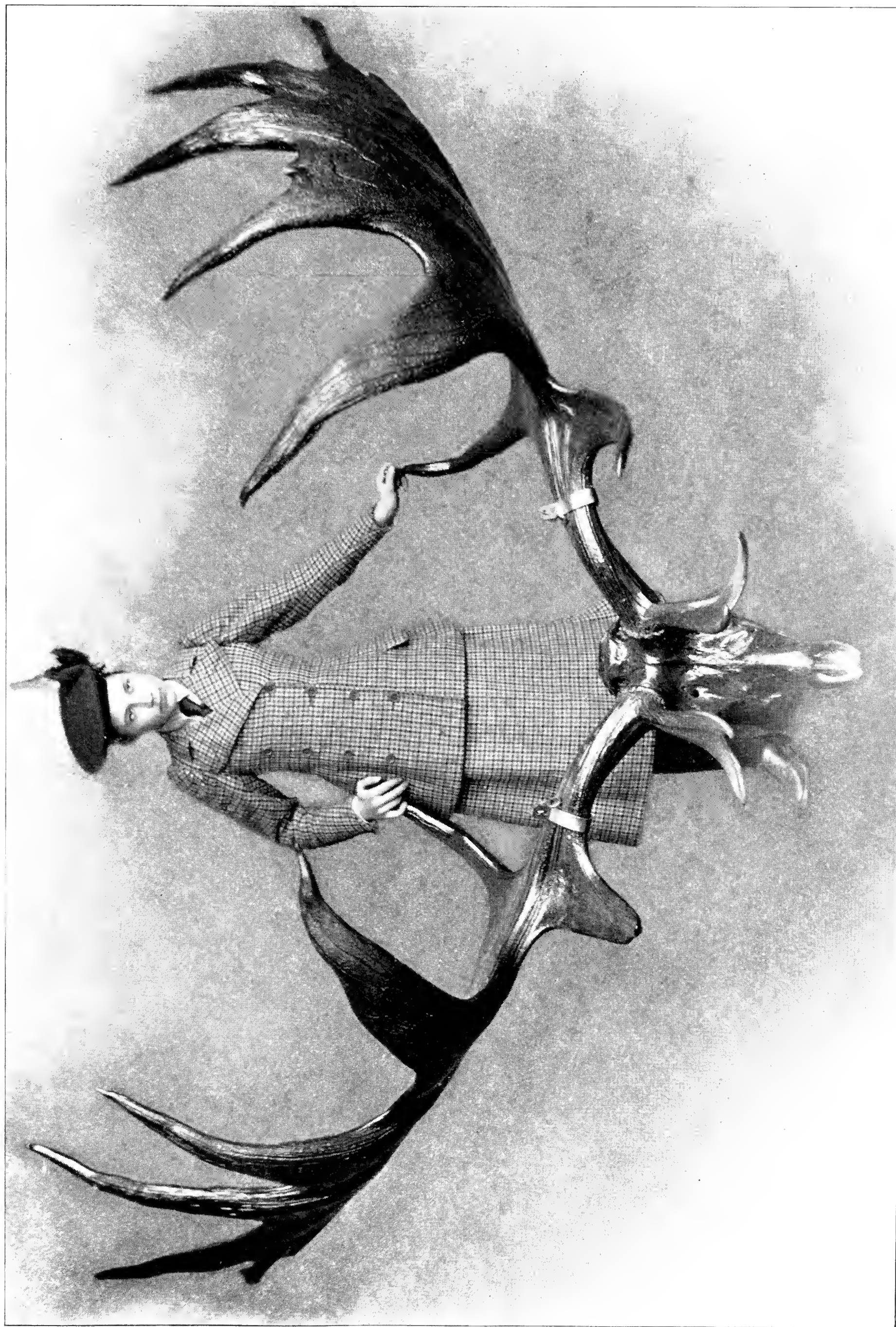
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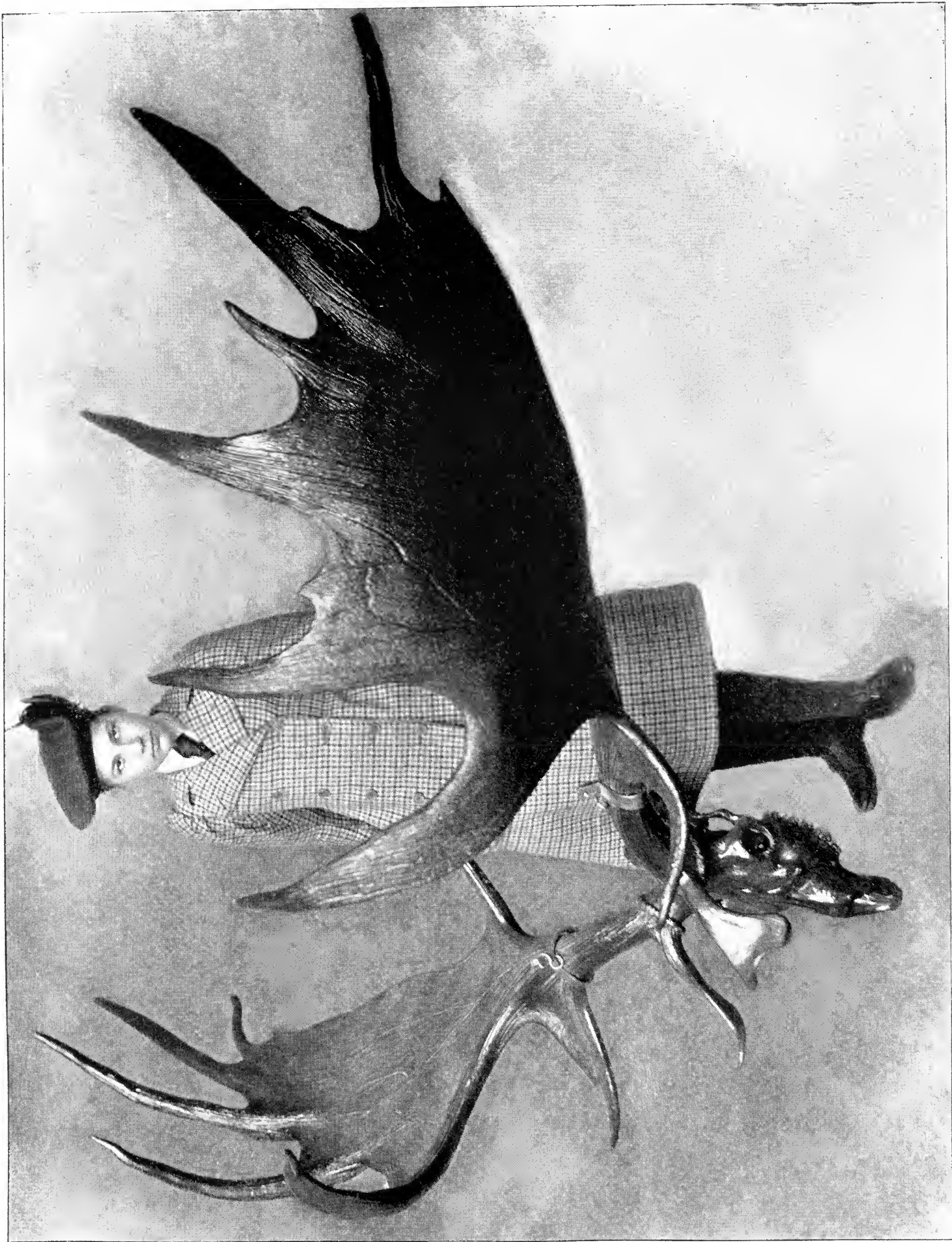
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GREAT HEAD OF THE GIGANTIC IRISH DEER FOUND NEAR TULLAMORE, IRELAND
In the possession of the Duke of Westminster (front view).



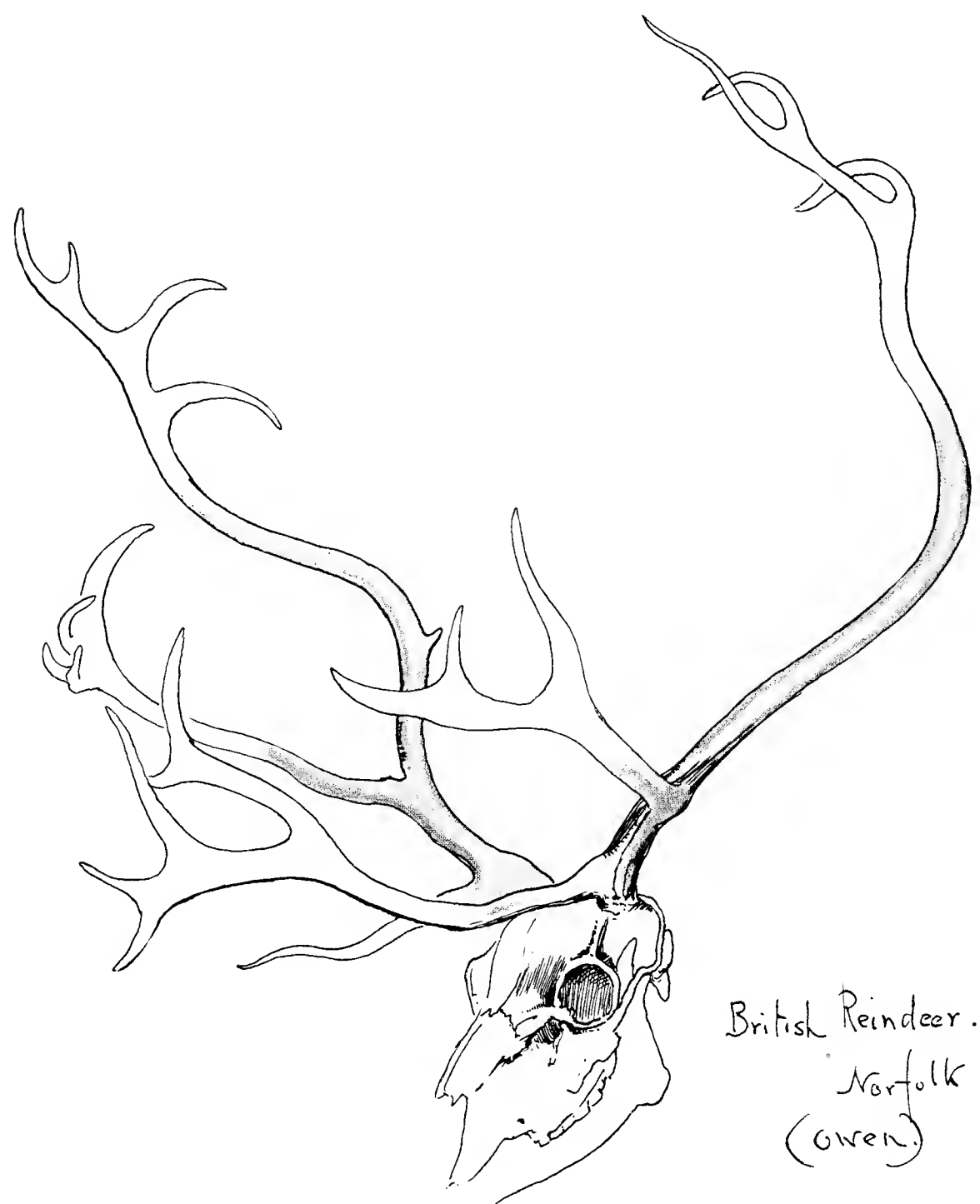
GREAT HEAD OF THE GIGANTIC IRISH DEER FOUND AT TULLAMORE, IRELAND
In the possession of the Duke of Westminster (side view, showing width of the palm).

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interesting that it seems somewhat ungracious in me to be now finding fault with his figures. We must remember, however, how few specimens Sir Richard had to study compared with the wealth of examples the student has to-day, and how natural it was for him to generalise as to the possible lengths which horns might be found to have attained.

THE REINDEER (*Cervus tarandus*).—This deer must have been very abundant in later Pleistocene times. There is no doubt that, together with the gigantic Irish deer, they grazed in large herds on the margins of the Irish lakes, where they eventually became entombed, and it is more than probable that they were the most common species of deer, not



excepting the red deer, for Professor Boyd Dawkins found portions of the bones and horns in no less than thirteen out of the twenty-one caverns examined by him, whilst remains of the red deer were only found in seven. The greatest number of horns found in one place is recorded by Sir Charles Lyell as discovered in a cave in Glamorganshire. He gives the number of antlers as a thousand. In point of form and entirety of parts quite the best skulls and antlers have been found in Ireland. Those in the possession of the Royal Dublin Society are probably unequalled, the best specimen coming from the Curragh bog, near Ashbourne, County Dublin, where it was found in 1861. Dr. Carte describes it in 1863 as "the finest specimen of reindeer that has yet been found in a fossil state," and Professor V. Ball says that the largest specimen in that collection measures 3 feet 7 inches round the curve, with a span of 3 feet. A much finer example of a single horn, however, has recently been acquired by the British Museum, South Kensington. It was found at

HEADS OF MEGACEROS HIBERNICUS, SHOWING VARIOUS TYPES

FIG. 1.—Skull and antlers from Loch Gur, County Limerick.—The right antler is unusually bifurcated. Heads of this type of abnormal horn-growth rarely occur. A head very similar to this one was unearthed in 1895, whilst another, with long frontal tines, was discovered some years previously. These came from the same locality as the first.

FIG. 2.—This remarkable head, with the complete skeleton, was presented to the Royal Dublin Society by Archdeacon Maunsell in 1824. It is by far the best in their Museum, which contains some fifty others. Besides being a head which has required little restoration, it is remarkable for its great weight (skull and antlers 87 lbs.), the extraordinary width of the palms ($22\frac{1}{2}$ inches), and the fact that the sur-antlers are double pointed. What this great head has gained in weight of horn and palmation is slightly lost in general elegance of form and span. Length of the right antler along outside curve is 5 feet 9 inches.

FIG. 3.—This head, from County Waterford, is in direct contrast to Fig. 2. The horn-growth on the skull of a fine adult animal has distributed itself into long elegant points, which, combined with good span, have taken away to a certain degree from the breadth of the palm. The measurements of this head are as follows: Spread (tip to tip), 9 feet 4 inches; length round inside of horn, 6 feet (right horn), left horn, 5 feet 8 inches; circumference above burr, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches; width of palm, $17\frac{1}{4}$ inches; points 13 + 10. In the possession of J. G. Millais.

FIG. 4.—Skull and antlers of a very old stag, evidently "going back," points clubbed and weak and not fully developed. In possession of Sir E. Loder. Span, widest, 6 feet 8 inches. Limerick.

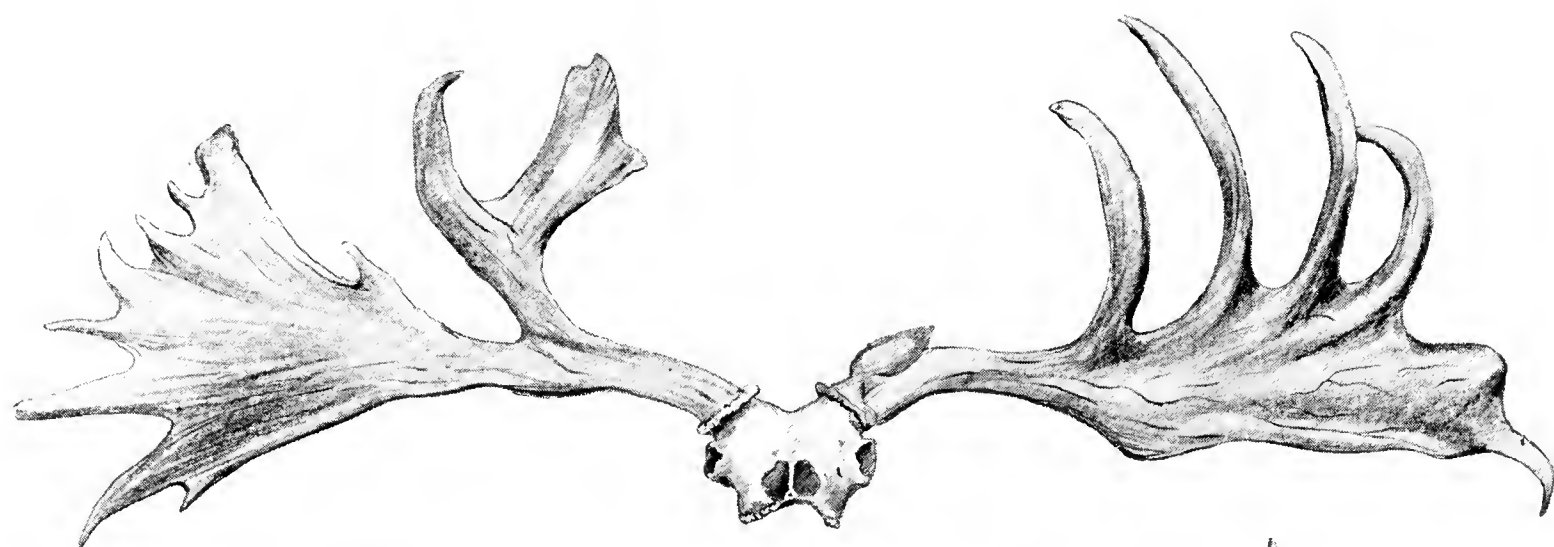


Fig. 1.

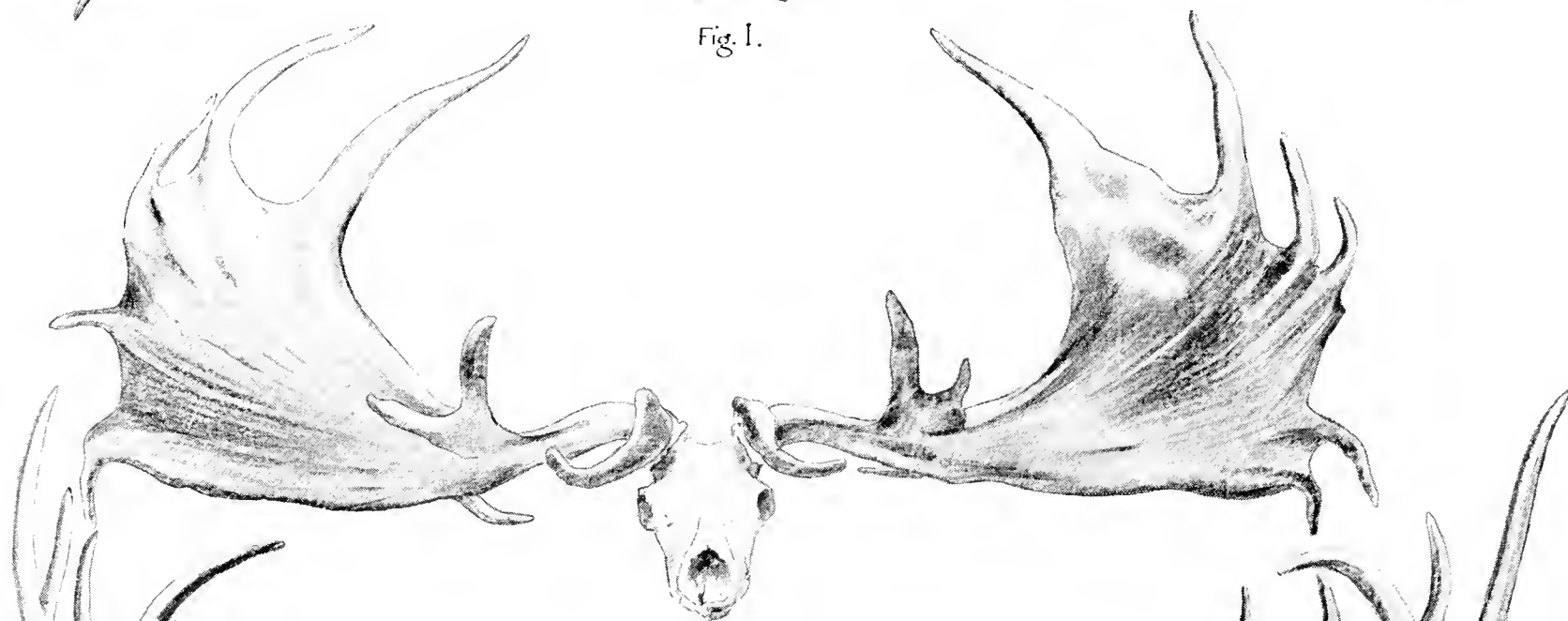


Fig. 2.

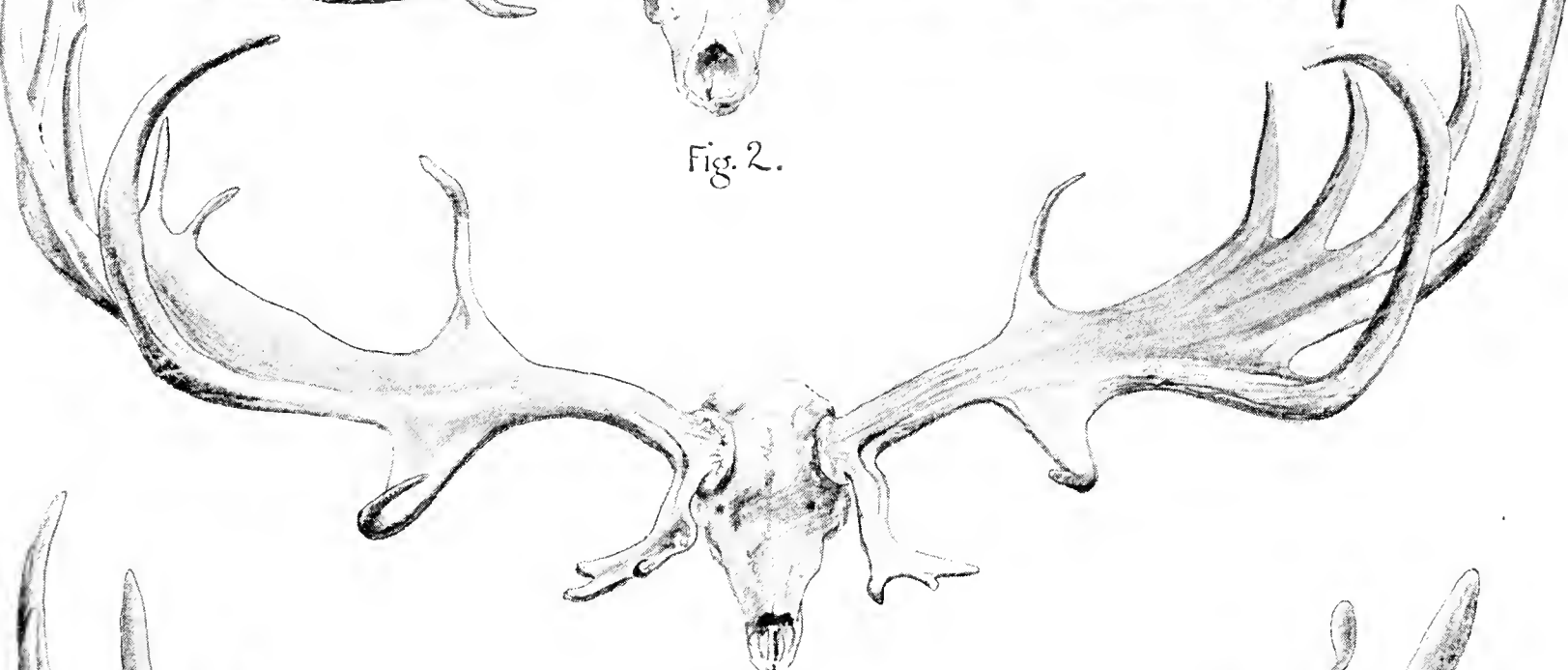


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

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SOME TYPES OF HEADS OF THE GIGANTIC IRISH DEER (for description see opposite page)

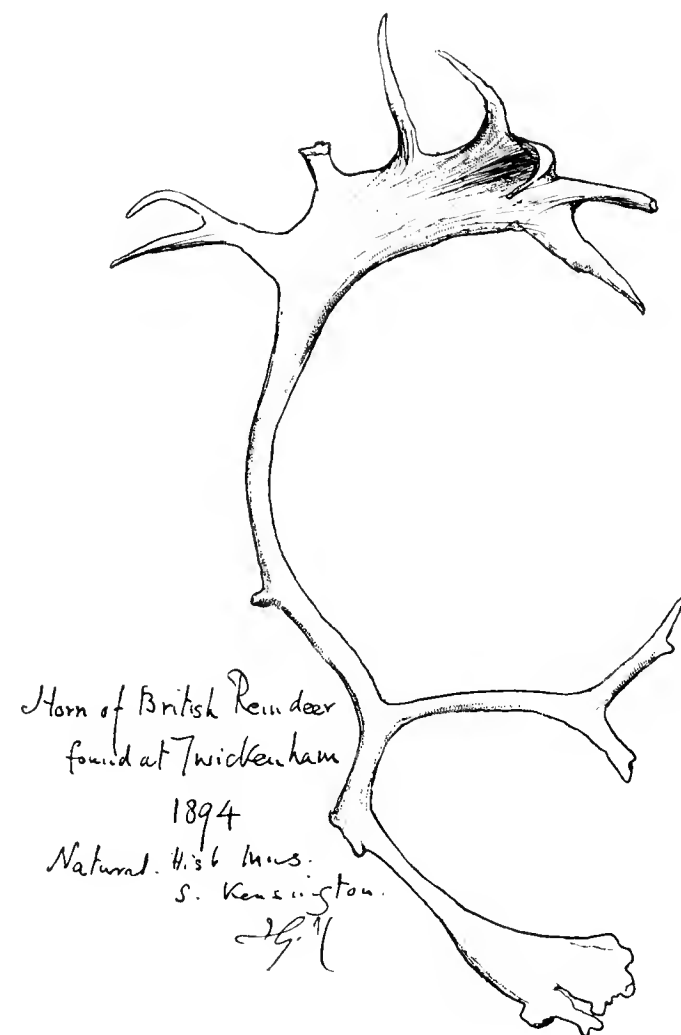
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Twickenham in 1894, and is in fine preservation, with few points missing, whilst the measurements which I have recently taken show—length $47\frac{1}{2}$ inches, beam $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches, points 15.

Tracing the history of the reindeer from the Pleistocene age to its association with prehistoric man, Dr. Smith notices that the first direct evidence we have of their coexistence was the finding of the horn fragments of this deer, together with the remains of domesticated animals, an iron spear-head and dagger, and ten human skeletons, in a "broch" at Kintradwell, near Brora, Sutherland. The "brochs" referred to by Dr. Smith are not uncommon in the Orkneys, Sutherland, and Caithness, particularly in the Orkney islands. To all appearance they are but grass-covered mounds; some, like the Maeshowe in Orkney, being quite little forts. They were doubtless the burial-places of the Chiefs of prehistoric man, and nearly all contain pieces of deer horn, human remains, shells, rude pottery, and stone implements. One which was excavated near Loch Stennes, Pomona, contained all these remains as well as fragments of horn of both red deer and reindeer (I examined them at Stromness in 1886), and we may fairly conclude that most of these "brochs" would on examination give similar results.

These evidences all tend to confirm the truth of the tradition that in the twelfth century the Jarls of Orkney were in the habit of crossing the Pentland Firth for the purpose of hunting the reindeer, as related by Torfaeus in his *History of Orkney*. He says, "Consueverant comites in Catanesiam, indeque ad montana ad venatum caprearum rangiferorumque quotannis profiscisci." *Anglice*—"They were in the habit of crossing over to Caithness every year, and there hunting in the wilds the Roe and the reindeer." This statement of Torfaeus seems to be the only direct evidence we have of the existence of the reindeer within historic times, although his remark is backed up by Jonaeus, a learned Iclander, who says that the Jarls of Orkney hunted in Caithness in 1159. But for a full discussion of this subject my readers cannot do better than refer to Mr. J. E. Harting's excellent work on *Extinct British Animals*. They will find there a most interesting and elaborate account of the reindeer from the earliest times, and all the arguments for and against the correctness of Torfaeus's statement.

That the climate of Great Britain is probably unaltered since the landing of Caesar, and that this country was formerly the habitat of the reindeer, would seem to indicate that the reintroduction of these animals as denizens of wilds would be successful. Such attempts, however, as have been made in this direction by the Earl of Fife in Mar Forest and Mr. Robert Traill in Orkney have not been encouraging in their results, in spite of the abundance of reindeer moss (*Cladonia rangiferina*) which grows freely in Northern Scotland and the Orkneys.



CHAPTER II

RED DEER (*Cervus elaphus*)

To the scientific naturalist a monograph on British Cervidae, as this is intended to be, may seem incomplete when the early history of this, our best-known deer, is but lightly touched upon; but it must be remembered that I am writing mainly for sportsmen and field naturalists, whose interests are not altogether of the antiquarian order; and though I have myself given much time and attention to the study of fossil and other remains, and the strata in which they are found, other writers on natural history have had the audacity to anticipate my remarks in so able and exhaustive a fashion that on this point there is hardly anything left for me to say.

The very earliest stratum in Great Britain which yields remains of an animal identical with the red deer of to-day is found in the red crag at Newbourne, Suffolk. Through the succeeding ages—the early Pliocene and Pleistocene periods down to historic times—we have a continuous chain of evidence showing that the species always existed in numbers in this country; and from what is left to us of their skulls and horns we see that when our little islands formed part of the great continent of Europe the stags must have approached in size the great continental form of the animal, their fuller development being arrested by the climate of our more northern latitude. Finally, with insular isolation came further degeneration, as manifested by a still greater decline in the size of horns and skulls of animals born at a later period.

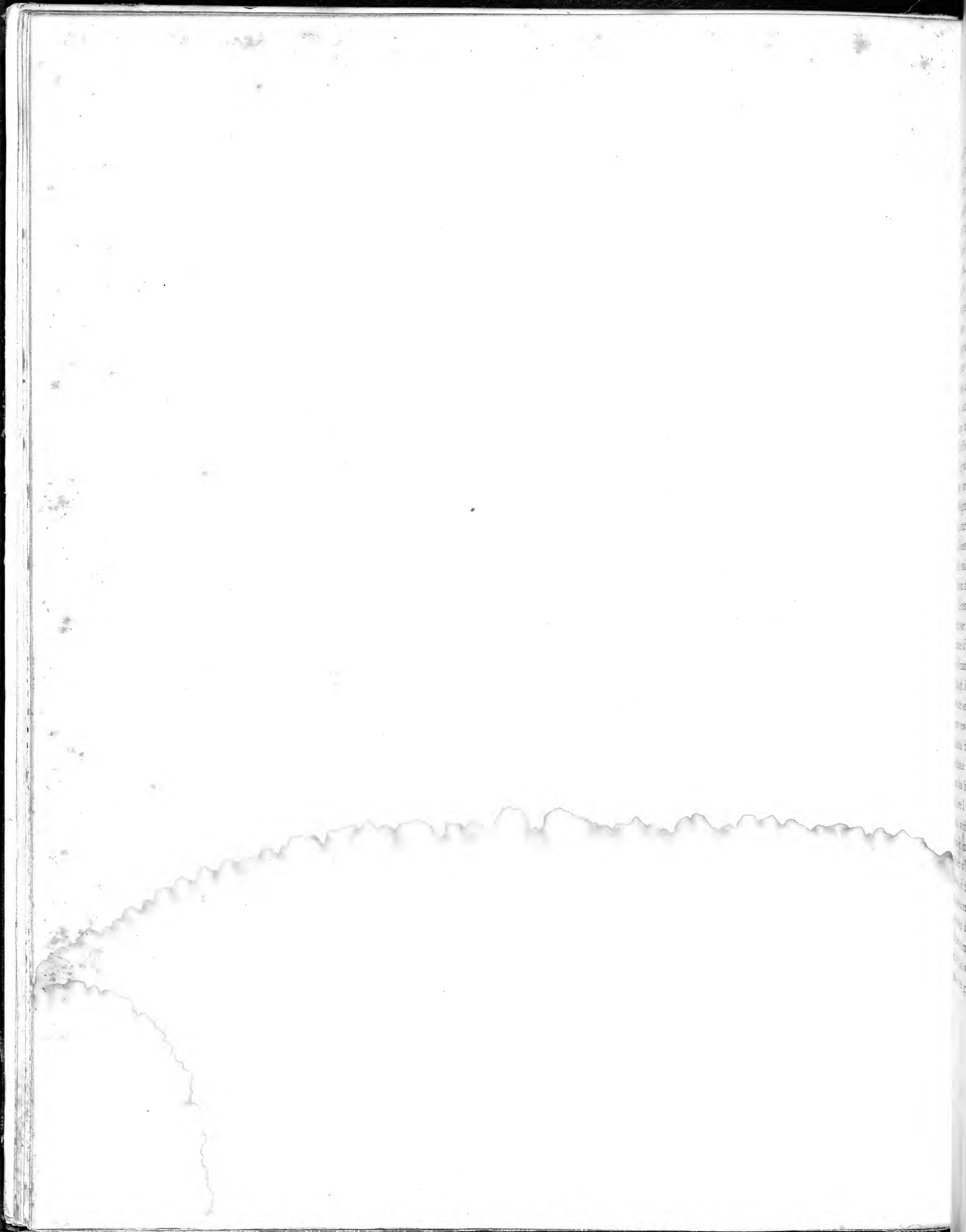
The landing of the Caesars, or rather perhaps the conquest by the Normans, marked the introduction of an era when men hunted rather for the sake of sport and exercise than for food and the luxury of fresh meat. It was the barons and dependants of the Conqueror—great lovers of the chase—who, in order to have game always at hand, began to make great enclosures in the virgin forests of Southern Britain for protecting the deer. Indeed the chase seems to have been the chief delight of all the early English kings, and they spent much of their time on horseback amidst these wooded glades.

The number of these parks increased gradually till the time of Cromwell, at which period they were probably more numerous than they are to-day, for, labour being abundant and cheap, walls and fences were quickly run up and the deer driven in. But the Round-heads would have nothing of this sort. With their craze for pulling down anything and



Wind Staking, Glen Tilt.

Scottish Engraving Co.



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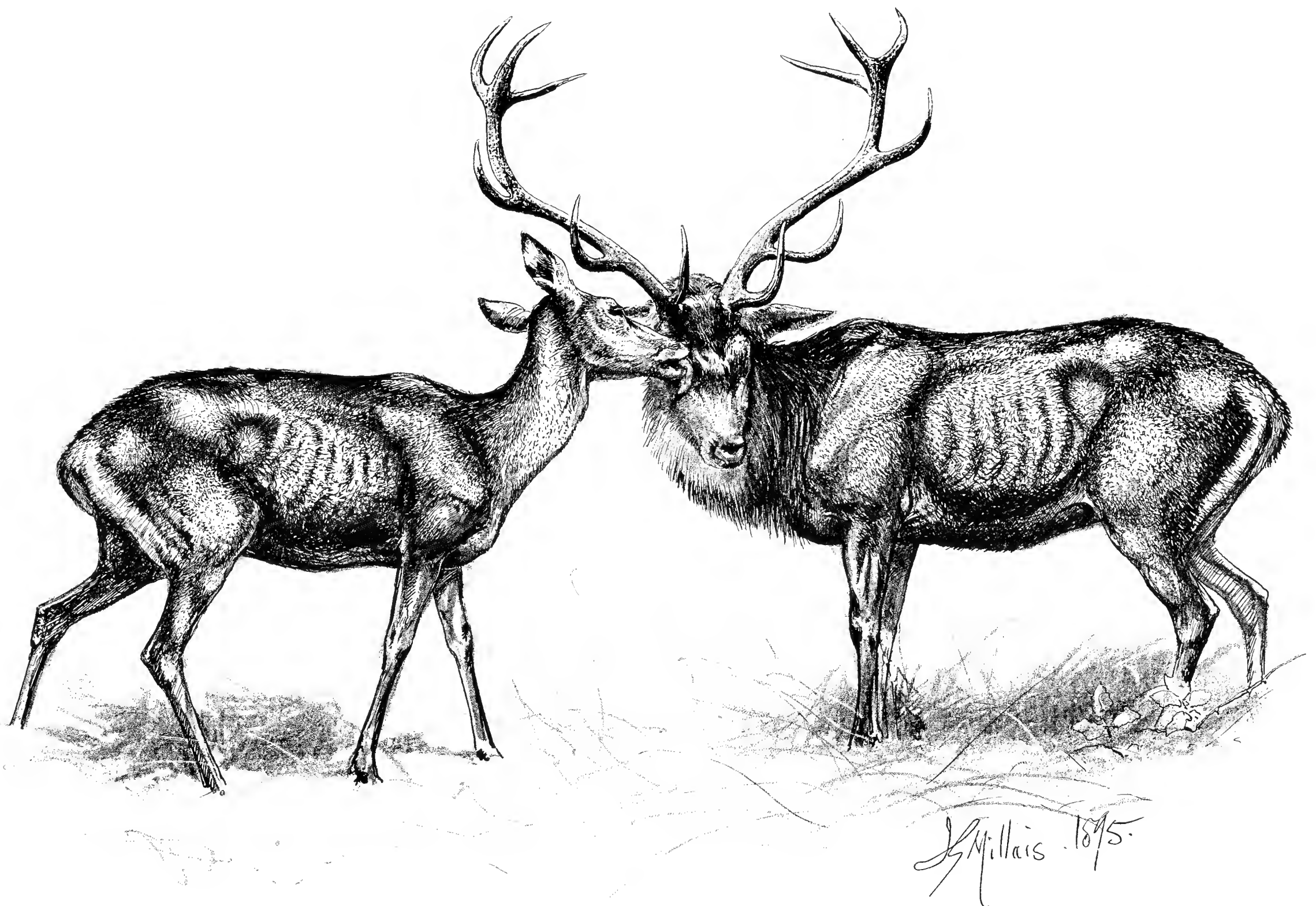
everything that other men had set up, they destroyed great numbers of the parks, breaking down the fences and allowing the deer to escape. The restoration of Charles II. may therefore be given as the date when most of our existing parks were formed. And what a glorious heritage they are! To-day the Englishman is as proud of his parks as the Scotchman of his wild moorlands and rugged mountains; and well he may be, for in point of sylvan beauty there is nothing in the world to compare with them. In our fertile soil and congenial climate, oaks, beeches, elms, and firs (now indigenous) attain the highest degree of perfection, and these, in combination with arboreal gems from other lands, cunningly interspersed or grouped together, are at once a triumph of the gardener's art and a sight that even a tax-collector could hardly look upon without emotion. Look, for instance, at the magnificent parks of Savernake, Windsor, Chillingham, Lyme, and Melbury. Old England, I repeat, may well be proud of these and the ancestral homes they adorn; and yet in some respects they are, to my thinking, eclipsed by the noble domains of Powerscourt (County Wicklow) and Drummond Castle (Perthshire). These two parks are well worth going any distance to see, even if perforce accompanied by an army of gaping tourists. The waterfall in Powerscourt deer park is not only the highest but the loveliest in our islands. There, if anywhere, is the haunt of the fairies, for the whole place is under the spell of this enchanting stream. At Drummond Castle, too,—Lord Ancaster's seat, near Crieff—is another delightful combination of the wild and the tame. Glorious stretches of forest and grass land, intersected by streams and lakes, here show up as some fertile garden in the midst of the old forests and hills of Caledonia, which rise up and surround it on all sides. The foreground, middle distance, and where the hill-tops are lost in clouds are all strikingly beautiful from their force of contrast, which is, after all, what gives the greatest pleasure to the eye. Given, too, a day when the sun struggles forth amongst the showers that chase each other over the landscape, like smiles and tears on a woman's face, and you have before you a picture of earthly grandeur and ineffable sweetness, such as cannot fail to make glad the heart of man.

Although it may seem unnecessary to say much of park deer as a distinctive subject, since they are simply wild deer under restraint, yet this at least must be noticed—that but for the near view, which can only be obtained in our parks, many little traits and peculiarities of the animal, highly interesting to naturalists, would never be known. I say this with great confidence as the result of my own experience during the last few years, when most of my time has been given to the study of deer under all conditions of life.

And here I must express my obligations to my friend, Mr. Charles Lucas of Warnham Court, who, with a kindness I can never forget, allowed me free access to his park, besides helping me in many other ways. The Warnham deer are second to none in this country in the matter of body and horn. Their origin, however, is quite recent, and even after the introduction of the Stoke deer, by which the herd was strengthened some years ago, they were in nowise remarkable until the late Mr. F. M. Lucas (the well-known left-handed bat, and a thorough all-round sportsman) took them in hand and began a series of experiments with a view to improving the pasture—about 250 acres in extent. Every alternate year he dressed the land with bone-dust, the effect of which soon made itself felt. The nutrimental qualities of the grass seemed to be improved 70 per cent, yielding exactly what was wanted

for fattening and horn-growing. Half the park is reserved for hay, so the red deer, which number about 100, have no great extent of ground to range over, and very little winter feeding. Nevertheless they thrive and have continued to improve steadily since 1884, when the dressing was first tried, and at the present time a four-year-old Warnham stag is better than an adult animal in most other English parks.

I have endeavoured to illustrate the proportions of the two great Warnham stags which were killed respectively in 1889 and 1894. The stag with the long bifurcation of the left horn was killed as a nine-year-old. He weighed 31 stone clean; 30 stone clean is a



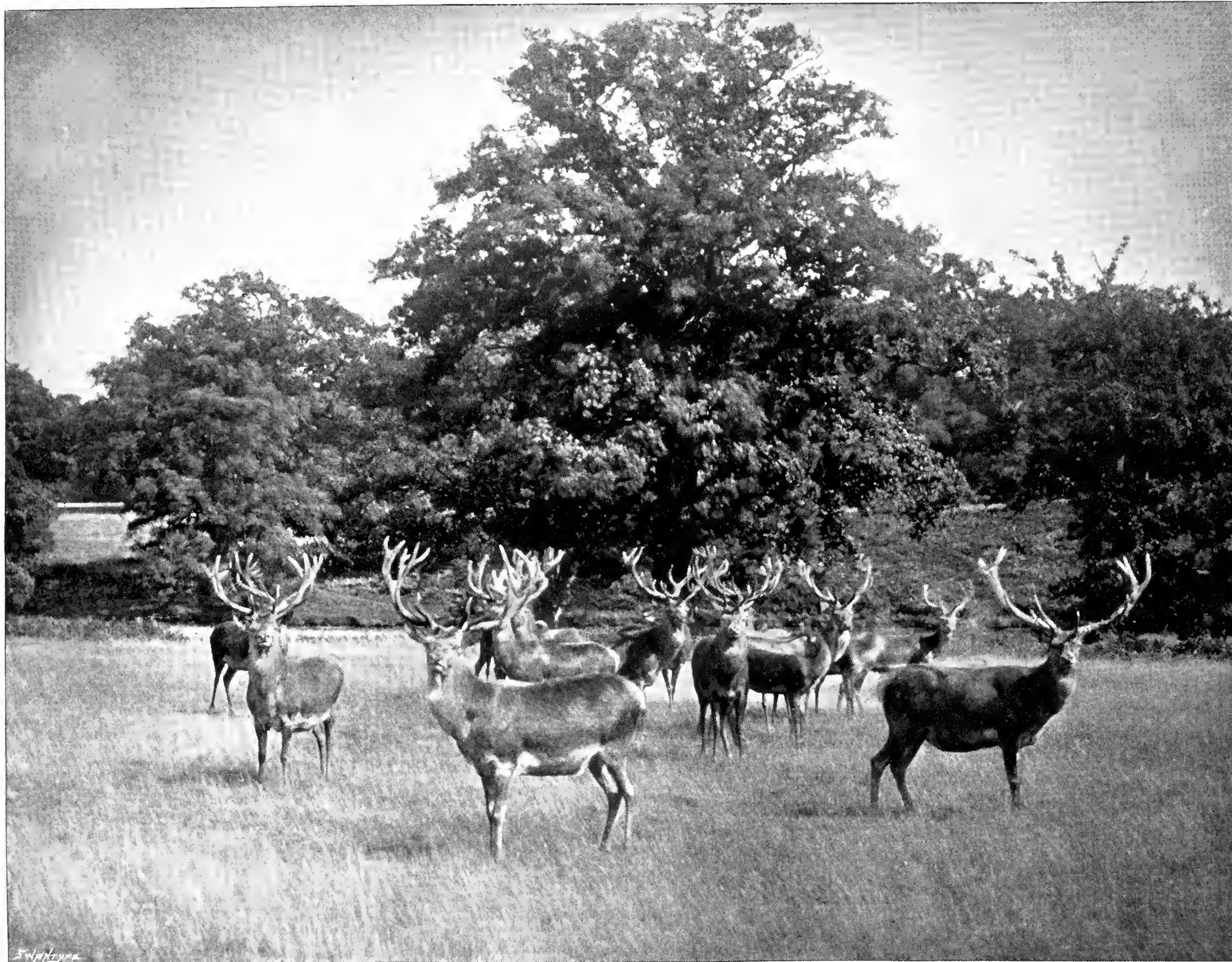
WASH AND BRUSH-UP, NO CHARGE

big weight, and is doubtless occasionally reached, whilst 25 stone and upwards may be regarded as exceptional.

This 31-stone Warnham stag is not the heaviest beast ever in this park, for another animal killed a few years previously must, from his "dressed" weights, have scaled at least a stone more, but his precise weight I am unable to give. The fourteenth Earl of Derby, writing in the *Field*, 27th February 1869, says, "The heaviest stag I ever killed at Knowsley weighed 30 stone 4 lbs., or 424 lbs. clean after gralloching. The gralloch would probably weigh 6 stone more. He was an outlying deer, and very fat."

Reverting for a moment to the little peculiarities of animal life that have so often come

under my eye, I cannot but think that it is simply from lack of patience that many an observer so frequently fails to notice habits of interest. A naturalist may have the same creatures under view for a long period and yet see nothing out of the common either in their habits or actions; so, jumping to the conclusion that there is nothing more to be learnt, he gives up the quest, like the gazer who said, "The Spanish fleet I cannot see, because 'tis not in sight." He has, in fact, missed his chance. If he had watched and waited just one day more he might perhaps have seen many things worthy of his notice;

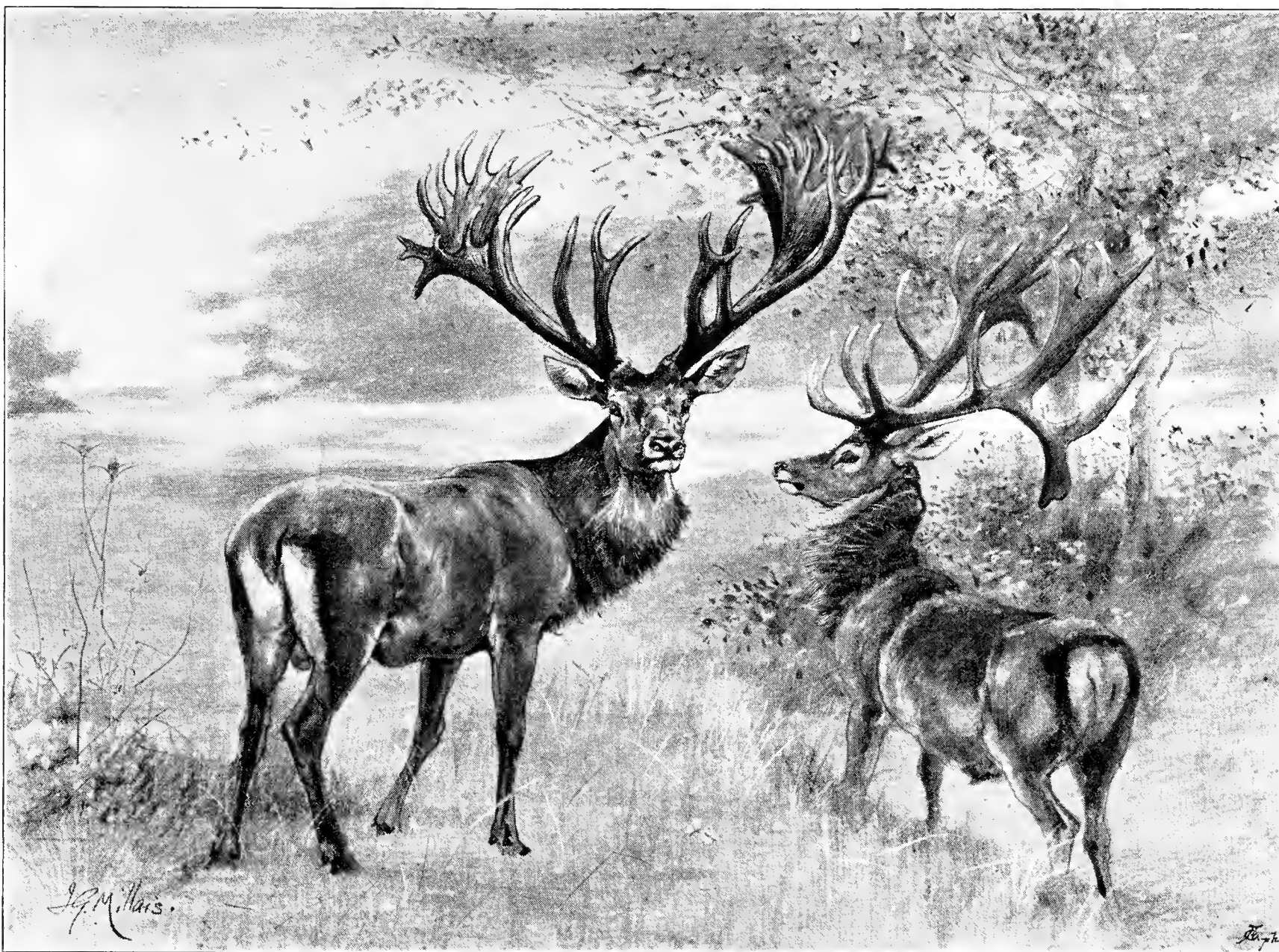


PARK STAGS OF THE STOKE HERD, 1872

for nearly all wild animals, both birds and beasts, have at least one day in the year when they disport themselves in an eccentric fashion or exhibit some marked deviation from their ordinary habits. And deer are no exception to the rule. One must watch them constantly and at all sorts of times to understand their varying moods or witness their peculiar frolics.

In a park red deer are never really tame, nor is it at all desirable that they should be. Like wild fowl, they readily learn to distinguish between friends and foes in human shape; so if the observer wishes to get very near to them, he must try, first of all, to gain their confidence. By well-worn paths, which the deer themselves know, one can pass within a few yards without causing alarm, the difficulty being to get near a herd in full view in the

open park. It is wonderful, however, how near one can get even under these circumstances by patience. The thing to do is to lie down and advance gradually a few yards at a time, always allowing time for the animals to allay their suspicion; for even with such comparatively tame creatures as park red deer, if one attempts to get near them all at once the chances are that they will keep continuously on the move. Due care then being exercised, the observer can often lie down within twenty yards of a herd and with a glass see even a starling pick a fly out of the corner of a stag's eye.¹ During this month in which I am writing (July) the deer are troubled by flies in the hot weather, and will permit much the same familiarity on the part of the starlings as the cattle and game of South Africa allow to the



THE TWO GREAT STAGS OF WARNHAM COURT

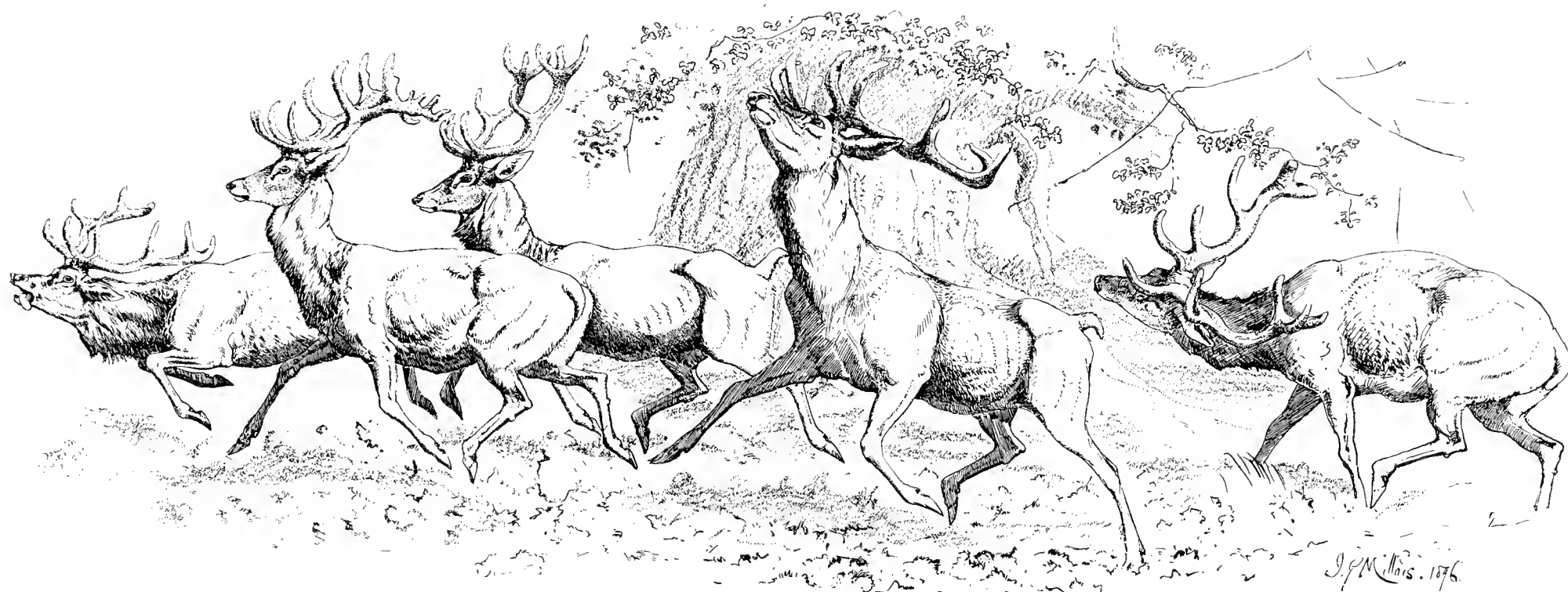
rhinoceros bird. Yesterday (13th July) whilst I was drawing the stag whose horn-growth figures later on, a starling remained on the upper part of his face, catching flies with surprising agility for more than a quarter of an hour. The stag was evidently grateful for the ministrations of his small friend, for I actually saw him close his left eye and keep blinking it when a fly had entered, whilst the starling, who seemed to understand the situation at once, reached down over the eyebrow and skilfully extracted the insect.

The jackdaws, too, were another source of amusement in the spring. When building in the tower of Warnham Court they are exceedingly fond of lining their nests with deer's

¹ The following note in the *Field* of 18th July 1896 is interesting as an illustration of the polite attentions of the feathered tribe in ridding cattle of their insect pests. The writer says, "I noticed on July 10 a Jersey cow lying down, and a couple of fowls picking the flies from her eyes and head generally; she evidently was having a good time, wagging her ears, and putting her head in most convenient position."

hair, preferring, apparently, the hair of the red deer to that of the fallow. To collect the cast patches of hair lying about would be far too honest and simple a proceeding for birds whose rascally propensities are only equalled by their love of mischief, so they generally obtained their material direct from the animal itself. And this was the way they managed it. Habitually suspicious of danger, they would never alight directly, as starlings do, on a deer's back, but settling in pairs close to one of the herd, they would commence strutting around with an air of innocence and unconcern that would deceive the most wary beast that ever lived, and then when the deer lowered his head to feed, or looked away at some object in the distance, one of the rascals would fly up suddenly, and, pouncing on a bunch of loose hair which he had previously "spotted," would carry it off in triumph.

One of the many advantages of observing deer in a park is the opportunity it affords for detecting the apparently subtle means by which red deer communicate to each other the presence of danger, and this can be readily done by simply betraying one's presence when



STAGS PASSING UNDER TREES WHEN THEIR HORNS ARE IN VELVET

within a few yards of the herd. On one occasion, after showing myself to a single old hind, she at once, by her strained attention and quick veering round, made her fear known to the animals alongside, who at once took the hint, all except two yearling calves who were feeding close to her. I then saw a very pretty display of red deer education. The two yearlings continued feeding without looking up, and the old lady, noticing their disregard, approached each in turn and touched him lightly with the point of her foot, after which she again faced round and looked carefully at the spot where my head had appeared. One of the yearlings then took the hint, but the other, after looking up, began to feed again with leisurely indifference. This was a bit too much for the now irate mother, so rushing at her disobedient child, she administered such a blow with one of her forelegs as to knock the unfortunate youngster clean off his legs. Nor is this practice confined to hinds; old stags will frequently communicate with each other by the rough-and-ready method of striking with a foreleg.

Red deer in parks, even where their range is restricted, are more or less governed by the same laws, and act in the same free-and-easy fashion, as their wild relations; and the

Board School craze not having yet extended to them, no marked deterioration in their manners is observable.

As to their feeding and resting hours, the following note by Mr. J. Whitaker, in his *Deer Parks and Paddocks of England*, may be taken as authentic: "From May till October they rest from about 9.30 A.M. till 2 P.M., sometimes in the shade and sometimes on the top of a hill, where they catch what little breeze there may be. During the period of rest they get up occasionally to stretch themselves, and after licking or scratching their sides and necks



with hoof and horn they lie down again, but always on the other side. They pass their time in chewing the cud and sleeping, and if the day be hot and sunny, they will lie with all four legs stretched out, exposing as much of their bodies to the sun as they can. About 2 P.M. they feed and wander about till 4, when they again lie down for about two hours, starting again about 6 P.M. and continuing until 9 P.M., when they rest until 5 the next morning, feeding from that hour until 9 or 9.30 A.M. In the winter they feed most of the short days, but when well supplied with corn and hay, they rest during the middle of the day."

In parks where there are both abundance and variety of feeding, little additional winter

food is required, but those who are so fortunate as to own these luxuries are generally in a position to supply that which will improve both body and horn. Under any circumstances the sustenance must be kept up throughout the winter, *i.e.* from the end of October till late in the spring, the exact period varying according to the season. For regular feeding beans and maize are best, although acorns, crab-apples, ensilage, ivy, and hay make an agreeable change, and in the spring branches of thorn and ash are most nutritious. The deer will peel them as cleanly as rabbits.

And now to Savernake Forest in Wiltshire, where so many happy hours of my life have been spent. It is not only the biggest, but, *me judice*, the fairest and most interesting of all our English parks, for here are preserved to us all the characteristic features of the primeval forest, and I can answer for it that in its enchanting solitudes trespassers have every chance of enjoying themselves to their hearts' content. Well do I remember my daily foray into those delightful woods during the five years of my school life at Marlborough, and how I suffered in consequence at the hands of good Dr. Bell and my form masters. In the classical language of the tombstones, "afflictions sore long time I bore," to which I



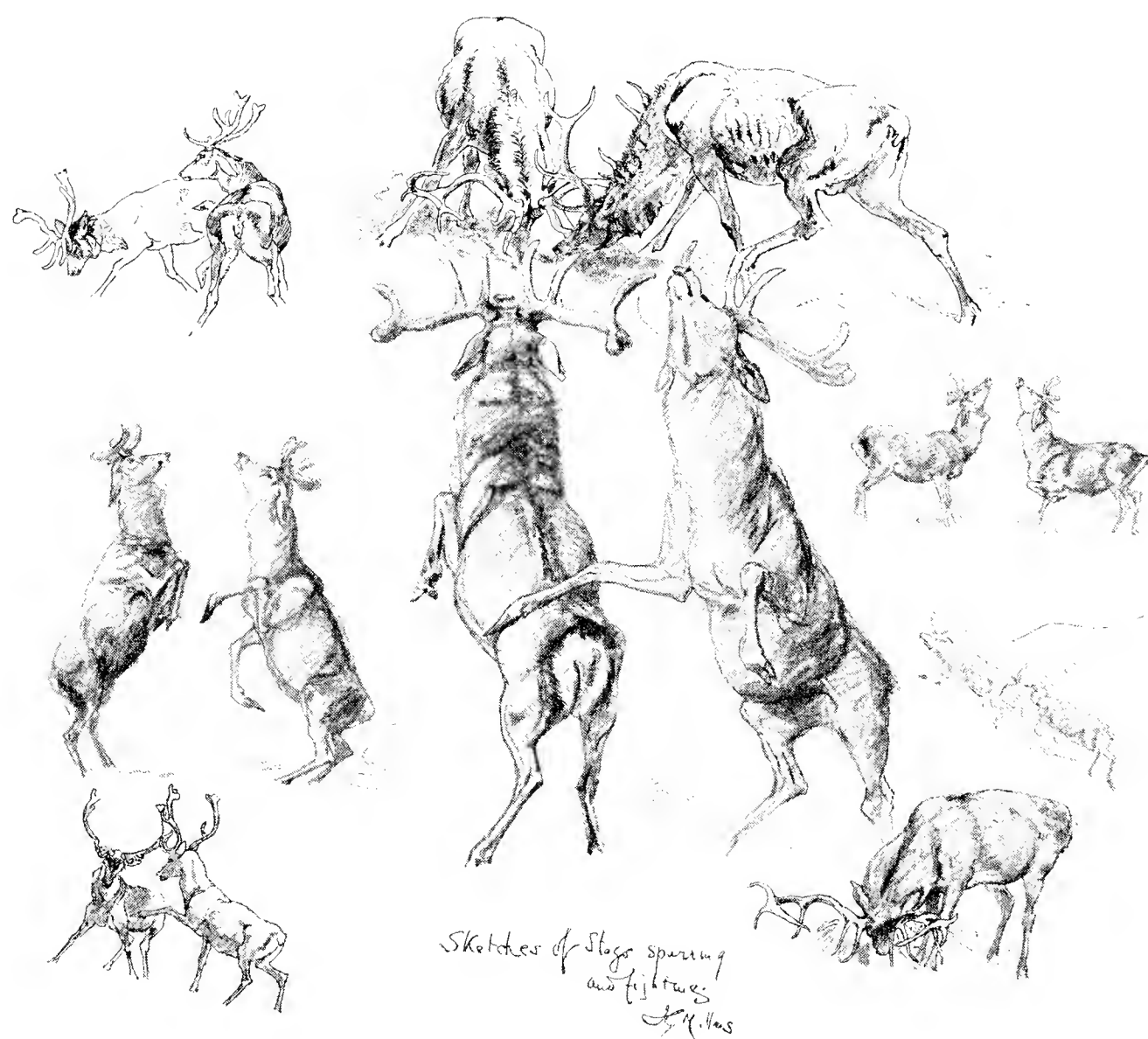
DOZING

might add, in humble imitation of the original, "canings were in vain." No power on earth could keep me out of those woods, and when this was at last discovered by my worthy preceptors they gave up the attempt in despair, and shut their eyes to my delinquencies as often as they could. Then my catapult and I had a real good time of it, and scores of birds, more or less rare, fell victims to my thirst for information. Many of them are in my collection now, the one that I treasure most being a fine specimen of the blackcap warbler that I shot in the Doctor's garden the day when he gave me my last swishing.

As to the park itself, can anything be more delightful? Four thousand acres in a ring fence; and a real forest too—not what is commonly understood by that term across the Border—a huge wood, in fact, intersected by wide glades and magnificent beech avenues, in which the deer roam at large in all their pristine freedom. Robin Hood and his merry men would have been quite at home there. So was I, and never more happy than when lying among the brackens, watching the stags settling their little differences, like so many Christians, by trying to kill each other.

One morning, much to my delight and to the envy of other boys, I found myself invited to breakfast with the noble owner of the park—"the Markiss," as we called him—

and afterwards to attend the catching of the big stags which were at that time annually "swopped" with Windsor and Stoke. What a glorious sight it was, to be sure! Herds of red deer had been driven into a smaller park of about forty acres near Savernake House, and men on horseback "rode out" the big stags, driving them at full speed towards a loosely-set-up net 7 feet high, which collapsed as the great beasts went crashing into it head over heels. Some five or six of the very best deer were captured in this manner, spectators assisting by closing in behind the stag as he entered the "straight" leading to the net. One gallant stag, I remember, twice cleared the net by a fair jump, but on the third attempt he caught his fetlock in the top mesh and came to the ground, breaking one of his legs in two places. Accidents like this, however, seldom happened, and on two subsequent occasions when I witnessed the stag-catching everything went off without a mishap of any



sort. The time to look out for squalls is when the deer is being loosed from the net. If allowed to lie on his side, he will probably strain himself and kick his holders all to pieces, but when thrown on his back and properly held he is more or less powerless, and his horns being sawn off, he is easily encarted.

Eridge, Ashridge, Lyme, Raby, and Stoke parks have long been famous for the size of their deer, Raby and Stoke being the most celebrated. It is doubtful if the Warnham deer of to-day are much superior to the Stoke herd when at its best—from 1872 till 1879.

The illustration on p. 25, from a photograph by Vernon Heath, taken in 1877, gives a good idea of some of the best stags of that date. Mr. Coleman, the owner, took a great interest in his deer, and did all he could to improve them by generous feeding and constant change of blood, a circumstance the more vividly impressed upon my memory as connected with the enrichment of my exchequer in a peculiarly pleasing way. I was at

that time (1877) at Dr. Hawtrey's school at Slough, and my mother being on a visit at Stoke Park, I too was asked to spend a day there. I went twice, and on the second occasion Mr. Coleman kindly offered me half a crown for a sketch of one of his big stags, which I at once proceeded to make. And now, mark this. Landseer was a frequent guest at Stoke—Landseer, on whose knee I had sat some years before and shown him how a stag should be drawn; yet *he* was never asked to draw any of the stags. *I was*. I drew the stag and got the coin, my first commission as an artist! The conclusion, I venture to hope, is obvious; it would be too great a shock to my modesty to draw it myself.

For some regrettable reason many of the Stoke stags, shortly before the herd was split up and sold, were allowed to become very tame. The result proved the folly of such a



THE HERD OF WHITE RED DEER, WELBECK, 1896

proceeding, for three owners of parks—Lord Ilchester, Sir Edmund Loder, and Mr. Charlie Lucas—who each bought some of the stags, were all unfortunate in their possessions.

Lord Ilchester bought six young animals, which, as they arrived at maturity, showed such audacity and fearlessness of man that in the rutting season the park at Melbury became unsafe. Most of these creatures he gave to Lord Burton, who turned them out in the forest of Glenquoich, where they doubtless improved the breed of the wild deer in the north-west of Scotland.

Sir Edmund Loder was equally unlucky, and was obliged to shoot his at Whittlebury for similar reasons.

Of the two that Mr. Charlie Lucas obtained, one proved a good stag and behaved himself properly; but the other turned savage quite suddenly one day in the rutting season. Some members of the family were just going in to dinner at Warnham when loud cries for help were heard apparently from a cluster of oaks near the house, and almost immediately

a big stag was seen chivying Muggridge (the old keeper) round and round a tree. A few minutes' delay might have cost the unfortunate man his life, but Mr. Lucas promptly seized a gun and ran out and shot the brute through the head. This is one of the few instances within my knowledge of a stag actually attacking a man in the rutting season. Many years ago the late Marquis of Breadalbane's piper at Taymouth was nearly killed by a furious stag, and in 1891 a keeper in Ross-shire, whilst on the way to a funeral over the hills, was attacked by a tame stag, and after a severe struggle was gored to death.

Nearly all such accidents occur in the uncertain twilight of evening or early morning. At such times and under such circumstances a stag mad with passion and jealousy will go for anything he sees moving; and when, added to this, the fear of man is more or less lost the danger is trebled.¹

Even a hind is not always to be trusted, especially when confined in an enclosure. Mr. Sydney Steel, my fellow-artist in this work, was working one day last year in the hinds' cage at the Zoo. We had been sitting together inside the inner enclosure, as we had frequently done before, and the animals, by constantly seeing us there, became so tame that they would even search in our pockets for biscuits. I had just left when an Edinburgh artist, entering the cage from the back, came into the open yard near the hinds. As quick as thought the old hind reared on her hind legs and struck him to the ground with a violent blow on his chest, and by the time Mr. Steel had his stick in hand and was coming to the rescue the hind again knocked the unfortunate man down and hurt him considerably. Of course the tables were immediately turned, and the victim was enabled to beat a hasty retreat, but for that day at least he had had enough of the Zoo, and was probably only too glad to find himself outside the grounds. Almost as soon as he had gone the hind came up to Mr. Steel again and began sniffing about as usual in a perfectly friendly way.

One more anecdote of tame red deer is perhaps worth recording here. When I was quartered at Edinburgh in 1886, Captain MacDonald presented to our regiment (Seaforth Highlanders) a stag calf, which, being the regimental emblem, was treated as everybody's pet. "Mac," as he was called, was a great ornament to the regiment as it marched out to field days in the Phoenix Park, and created much interest by the leisurely way in which he kept his place in front of the band. But that was only after he had learnt his drill. His first day's route-marching at Glasgow I well remember. Adorned with a white pipe-clayed collar ornamented with bells, he was lugged along by "two little bloomin' bounders wot banged the bloomin' drums." But this was an indignity "Mac" was not inclined to submit to; so, just as the barrack gates were reached, he charged backwards into the drums and pipes, putting an end to their music, and drawing forth instead a volley of sounds and speech not provided for in the "soldier's pocket regulations." I am pained to say the adjutant swore and the subalterns audibly sniggered. Indeed, for the first month or two "Mac" was not altogether a success, his aversion to music too often bringing sore trouble upon the band at moments when they particularly wanted to look their best. By and by, however, he became much more docile, and seemed to know what was expected

¹ A remarkable instance of this occurred some years ago in the Duke of Buckingham's park at Stowe, a stag attacking a carriage and pair that was conveying guests to the house. So furious was the onslaught of the animal that both guests and coachman had to take refuge under the vehicle, the deer having disabled the horses, one of which had to be shot.

of him, finally stepping out, and really adding an attractive feature to the show. Two remarkable traits in his character interested me very much. First, his extreme fickleness. At one time he would attach himself warmly to some private soldier, betraying an affection quite embarrassing in its strength and persistence. He would follow the man wherever he went, climbing the highest stairs in the barracks to where his pal dwelt, and in the barrack room he would lie on the floor and share the tea and bread or almost anything else that his friend offered him. But these maudlin fits never lasted more than a month. Within that time he would be off with his old love and on with another "soldier boy." One of his friends was in my Company, and when we paraded in the early morning for monthly training Mac turned up for the first few days and ran up and down the ranks uttering his plaintive cry until his friend was found; so in the end he had to be shut up till parade was over. When off parade he was ubiquitous and omnivorous; he was to be found in all parts of the barracks, and dearly loved poking his nose in anywhere where there was a chance of "grub."

Another *trait* of his was exhibited in the local knowledge he soon learnt to display. The sergeants' wives in the married quarters were especially kind to him, many of them giving him a little milk whenever he came their way; and as he grew older he managed to remember the different doors behind which the women were to be found, and nearly every morning, just after the breakfast pipes had sounded, off he would clamber up a steep stone staircase to the long balcony where he was accustomed to receive his favourite drink. Going up to the first door at which he knew he would be welcomed, he would strike it with his forefoot, and continue knocking until the door was opened. I went twice to see him go through this performance, and most amusing it was to watch. Though he went down the whole length of the passage, knocking at the doors till his wants were satisfied, he never stopped at any door where he had once met with a repulse.

When he grew big and strong he never attempted to strike any of the men, though sometimes rearing on his hind legs in a threatening manner; and though the barrack children often teased him till he struck out, none of them ever came to any serious harm. Like all pets, poor Mac came to a sad end, his omnivorous taste leading him one day to mistake some poisoned meat for something better. The Seaforths have now a hind which they say is less troublesome than her predecessor.

As a general rule, in parks stags of four years old and upwards keep in one herd by themselves, and the prickets and hinds run together, whilst the brockets generally associate with the stags when permitted to do so. After November, if the winter is severe, the two sexes mix indiscriminately, but in mild weather they separate, and so remain till about horn-casting time in March. As the horns commence growing on the stags they again separate, and live apart throughout the summer till fighting begins in September.

These big park stags are, as a rule, but moderate warriors. Their great weight does not seem to help them, as it would a wild stag, who on the vantage ground of a hill-side can bring his weight to bear. Nor does the possession of a fine head confer any advantage in this way. It is probably a hindrance rather than a help, and the stags seem to know this as well as the sportsmen. Park stags, too, never fight so long or so resolutely as wild ones; nor, if I may judge from my experience at Warnham, where I have watched them

closely, do they "hold" the rut for more than a few days. If, for once in a way, you want to see them fight in real earnest, you have only to run after the herd about the middle of September, and keep stirring them up till they jostle one another between trees or in some corner of the park; then all the deer about the same age will generally attack one another, and there is a high old row. But to do this more than once would be exceedingly unwise.

The stag carrying the great head shown on page 26 was probably the veriest duffer of a warrior that ever adorned the park. I remember him well: he looked superb when



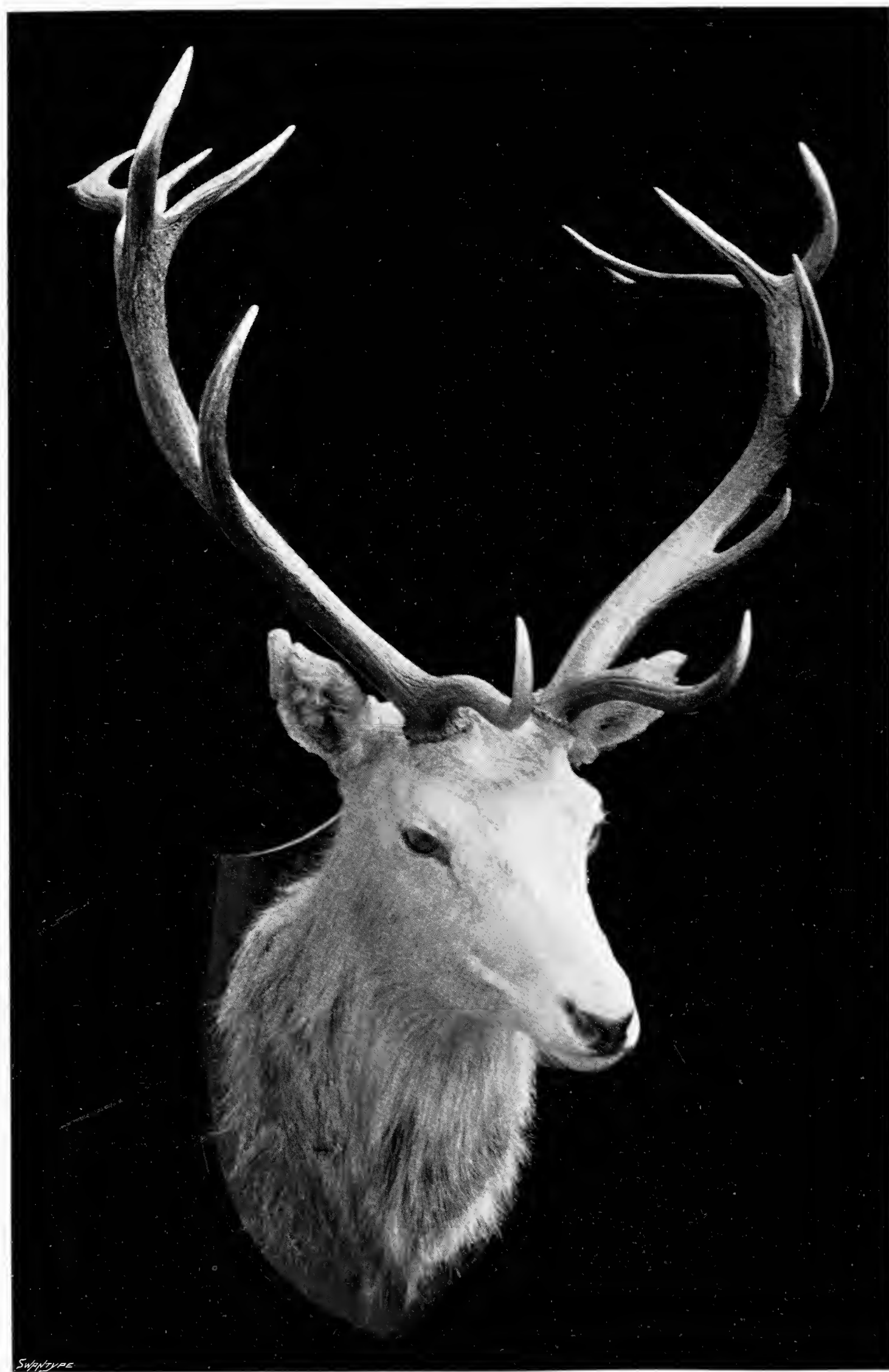
THE HERD OF WHITE RED DEER, WELBECK, 1896

holding his head up, but in movement he seemed quite overbalanced by the weight of his horns.

One season Mr. Charlie Lucas had all the big stags caught and their horns sawn off, under the belief that after that the big-headed fellow would of a surety command the harem. Nothing, however, could have happened more differently; even four-year-old stags drove him off and defeated him. Five years ago a 30-stone stag with a fair fighting head was also in the Warnham herd—just the sort that an inexperienced critic would have picked out at once as the boss for that season,—but on one of the first fighting days a young, active stag fell upon him, drove him half-way round the park, and then spitted him up against the fence, where he was found dead the next morning. Quite the best stag as to both head and body, bred by Lord Ilchester at Melbury, was also killed in 1893 by a much inferior beast.

Deer are, in fact, very much like human beings: excessive feeding and lack of constant exercise produce in time the "aldermanic" stag, fitter for a feast than a fray. But it by no means follows that in all parks where deer are well fed corpulence is encouraged.

Variety of food, and plenty of it, are essential to the raising of first-rate stock ; and where the range is ample, as in parks like Melbury, Savernake, Whittlebury, Colebrooke,



HEAD OF AN ALBINO STAG, WELBECK

Drummond Castle, and several others, that which is commonly described as "a clumsy and park-fed" beast is nowhere to be met with. In such enclosures we see only the wild stag in full perfection of form and vigour. If certain picked stags I have lately seen at Melbury were killed in Athole Forest, or Colebrooke deer were slain in Muckcross, I

would defy any expert living to prove they were not home-grown and pure-blooded wild ones.

Park deer make big wallows, which are mostly used by stags and hinds alike in spring to free their coats from the old hair, the *bain de marais* generally taking place at night.

Very often in a large enclosure quite a young stag will isolate himself from the others. He is to be seen alone at all times, and makes his resting-place and feeding-ground apart from the rest. In the opinion of one who has kept deer all his life, and is also a keen observer, stags which thus dissociate themselves from their fellows at an early age invariably turn out first-class animals, and probably the best in the place. He maintains that this early independence of character is a sure sign of future greatness.

It may seem extraordinary that deer should ever die of hydrophobia, but there can be no doubt as to the fact. In the *Field* of 21st March 1896 one who is evidently an expert gives so interesting an account of this malady and how it is spread that I make no apology for quoting his words at length. He says—

Rabies among deer occurs now and then from the incursion of a rabid dog, and in most cases the attack is unnoticed; in fact, no suspicion is aroused until the animals are found to be dying in considerable numbers from some mysterious malady. It might at first seem impossible for deer to get bitten by a rabid dog, but it is known to keepers that a doe with a fawn will go out of its way to attack a dog, and a rabid animal would not be likely to miss such an opportunity of inflicting a bite.

The symptoms which have been observed in several outbreaks among deer in the course of the last ten or twelve years were pointing the nose upwards and constantly sniffing, rubbing the forehead against trees, running wildly about and at other deer. In some instances keepers, while watching deer which they looked upon as suspected animals, were suddenly and furiously charged by them, and it was found necessary to shoot them.

It is not usual for cattle, sheep, or deer to use their teeth much as weapons, but they have sometimes been seen to bite at others; and rabid deer have been observed to use their teeth in a curious manner. It happened that in one outbreak the disease persisted, notwithstanding that all the deer which were seen to indicate signs of rabies were immediately shot. This state of things suggested some means of infection which had not been provided for; accordingly a very close watch was kept, and two facts were discovered which quite explained the mystery.

Among the first symptoms of illness of any kind among gregarious animals is the tendency to get away from companions. This symptom had been observed, and deer so acting were at once suspected. It was further noticed that the sick deer became an object of curiosity to its companions, who came stealthily up to it, and when it was seen to grasp a mouthful of hay or grass, some of the deer near it immediately seized the food and pulled it out of its mouth. Another peculiarity was seen in the behaviour of the sick animals, which suddenly developed a desire to nibble at the skin of any of the deer which came near them. There was no violence in the action to excite alarm or resistance; the deer merely rubbed its teeth gently against the skin, and continued the movement until it could be seen that a decided abrasion, attended with slight haemorrhage, was the result. By two methods of inoculation, therefore, the infection was communicated from rabid deer to the healthy animals.

There could be no doubt that the rubbing or nibbling at the sides of a healthy deer was a certain method of communicating the disease. Pulling a tuft of hay from the mouth of a rabid deer and swallowing it would be dangerous only in the very probable event of a minute wound existing in the mucous membrane of the digestive organs, but the process of gently gnawing the skin by a rabid deer would constitute the most perfect method of inoculation that could be devised.

Albinoes, or parti-coloured varieties of wild animals, when kept in confinement seldom make such a fine appearance as those of the normal colour ; but this, I think, cannot be said of the white Red deer kept in several parts of England. Sir Robert Harvey has the largest collection at Langley, near Slough. Mr. Whitaker gives the number as thirty-five. In Cranbourne Park, an enclosure of the great park at Windsor, and belonging to Her Majesty the Queen, there is to-day a herd of thirty of these animals, while Woburn has eighteen, and at Ashbridge there is only one left. At Welbeck, in the White Park there were in March 1896, when I visited it and took photographs, two white stags, three brockets, and eight hinds and calves. One of the stags was a splendid fellow, his head rivalling any of those of his albino predecessors hanging in Welbeck.

These Welbeck deer have pink noses and straw-coloured eyes. Strictly speaking, their coats are somewhat of a dirty cream colour, being not nearly so white as those of the white fallow deer in the same park, though when standing against dark trees with the sun shining on them they show some approximation to white.

The origin of the white deer in this country seems to be unknown. They probably came from some of the German princes or kings of Denmark, who have always had some albinoes of this description. The King of Denmark gave the late Marquis of Breadalbane some partial albinoes. They were turned out at Taymouth, and their only descendants left are two bald-faced hinds which live in the sanctuary at Black Mount, where I have seen them on several occasions.

The Duke of Portland, to whose kindness I am indebted for being able to give the pictures of the white deer here produced, takes a great interest in this particular herd, and endeavours to keep up the purity of the breed as far as possible. Unfortunately, however, a few seasons ago an ordinary coloured stag managed to clear the high fence several times during the rutting season, and jumped back again without being discovered. The result was, of course, several parti-coloured calves, which had to be removed.

One would scarcely think it possible that so small an animal as the Japanese deer could mate with the red deer hind, but it has actually happened in several British parks where Japs are now kept. Lord Powerscourt has bred no less than four of these hybrids, all males, two of which—really splendid little fellows—I had the pleasure of seeing in February 1896. Curiously enough, one seemed to take entirely after the male parent, and the other after the female. There was no question about their warlike disposition ; they were more than a match for the best Red stag in the park ; and a hybrid shot by his Lordship two seasons previously had assassinated the two best Red stags before retribution overtook him. Japanese deer, which, by the way, above all others, should never be allowed to become the least tame, are also kept at Leonardslee (Sir Edmund Loder), Colebrooke (Sir Douglas Brooke), and Melbury (the Earl of Ilchester). Their venison is delicious, and they increase more rapidly and are hardier than any foreign deer in existence.

Wapiti would do well in this country on a dry soil like that of the Downs, but, so far as I am aware, no one has tried them there. Lord Powerscourt kept them for some years at his seat in County Wicklow, but the stags eventually became savage and had to be destroyed. At present only Sir Peter Walker and Mr. Naylor-Leyland have these grand beasts in their parks, but I gather from Sir Arthur Grant that he is about to try to cross

them with red deer—an experiment which has already been successful in our Zoological Gardens.

The beautiful spotted Axis deer of India does exceedingly well on a dry and sandy soil where there is also good woodland shelter. Sir Edmund Loder has been very fortunate with these creatures, and a herd in their summer coats picking their way amongst the trees with the sun shining on their spotted backs is “a goodly sight to see.”



CHAPTER III

RED DEER (*Cervus elaphus*)

To trace the history of the wild deer of our islands we must go back to the twelfth century and look for a moment at the natural conditions of the country at that time.

Mr. J. E. Harting tells us in his *Extinct British Animals* that what may be described as one vast forest practically covered the whole of England and Scotland, coming up to the very gates of London itself. He refers also to a curious tract written by Fitz-Stephen, a monk of Canterbury, in 1174, in which it is stated that there were open meadows of pasture-lands on the north of the city, and that beyond these was a great forest, in whose woody coverts lurked the stag, the hind, the wild boar, and the bull—white wild cattle.

From the twelfth century onwards till the time of Queen Elizabeth the kings and nobles of the successive reigns gradually monopolised for their private uses of hunting and cultivation great portions of this virgin forest, till by 1536 the deer had become restricted in their range in the country lying south of a line that might be roughly drawn across England from Staffordshire to Yorkshire. Storer tells us that in the great mountain and moorland district to the north of Staffordshire lay the scene of Friar Tuck's ministrations to Robin Hood and his merry men. At that time the great forest ran northwards and eastwards to the Midland Forest of England and the Peak Forest in Derbyshire, and from there northwards the country remained in its primitive condition as a vast wilderness of wood and stream. Joining the Peak Forest came that of Chillingham, which extended right over the Border to Hamilton in Scotland; whilst again, north of the Tay and the Clyde, commenced what was known as "the Great Caledonian Wood," a wood which practically reached the moors of Caithness and the shores of the Pentland Firth.

From the time of Henry VIII. till the present day the wild red deer of England have seen one after another of their old fastnesses disappear, and now they owe their existence solely to the protection afforded them in a few isolated spots. They are still found in Devonshire and Somersetshire, where in 1871 the herd was estimated at 250 head. During the last few years, however, the range of the animals has been slightly extended and the number increased. When fishing in March on the Barle, near Dulverton in Somersetshire, I have twice seen small parties on the move. Martindale Fell in Westmoreland is another of the red deer's last strongholds, a full account of which will be found in the Rev. H. A.

Macpherson's *Fauna of Lakeland*. Here their favourite resort is Rampsgill in Martindale Forest. Forty years ago these deer were estimated at 300, and they were annually stalked by Mr. Hasell of Dale Main Hall, but since that time they have rapidly decreased in number. According to the Hon. G. Lascelles, some fifteen or twenty head of the original wild red deer still remain in the New Forest, Hampshire, and till a comparatively recent date they were found also in Woolmer Forest and in Cornwall. In Ireland, too, there are still the two fine forests of Muckross and Killarney, in which these deer have free range.

As to Scotland, it seems to be thought by many that the deer forests there are of but recent origin, and not infrequently we find them sarcastically referred to as the offspring of



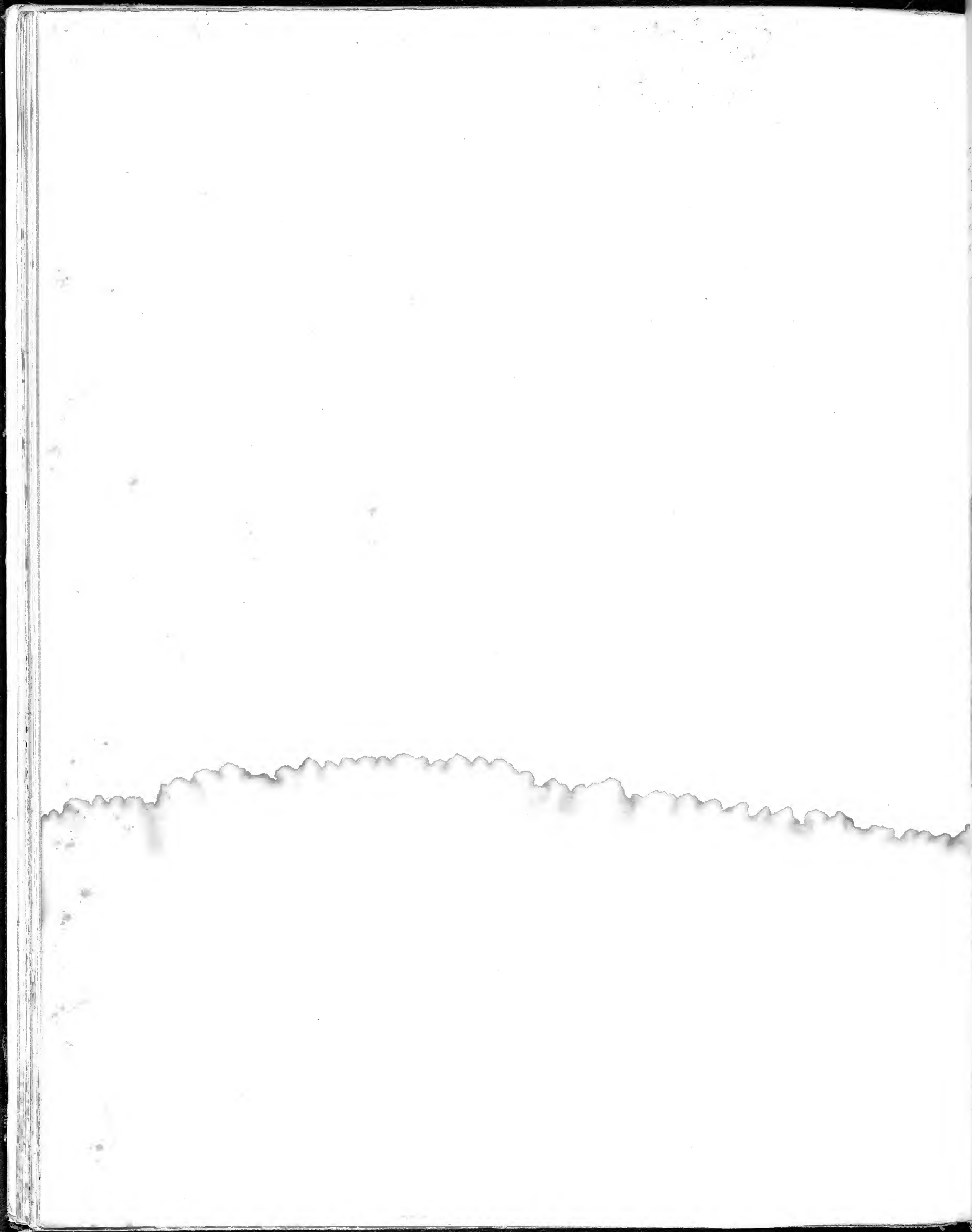
YEARLING HINDS, ARDVERIKIE

a pernicious alliance between the *nouveaux riches* of England and the impecunious Highland lairds. But this observation is rather smart than true. It is true only to this extent—that, owing to the wealth of English sportsmen and their passion for deer-stalking, the demand for forests in Scotland far exceeds the supply, and hence large tracts of land quite unsuitable for the purpose have been afforested, and though yielding but poor sport, command big figures in the market. But by comparison with the grand old forests of our Northern neighbours these latter-day creations are simply nowhere. In the olden time the heads of Scottish clans were just as good sportsmen and as fond of the chase as the English nobles, and we have but to look into the early ballads and romances of the sixteenth century to see how much thought was given to the preservation and pursuit of wild deer in the north of Scotland. At this period Athole, Mar, and Glenartney were as famous for their deer forests as they are to-day; and in 1549 Munro, High Dean of the Isles, wrote, from personal observation, of the deer which frequented the Western Isles. Jura he refers to as a “fyne forrest for deire,” and Islay as “fertil, fruitful, and full of natural grassing, with maney grate



They Kill us for their Sport.

SWANSEA ENGRAVING CO.



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deire, maney woods, and fair games of hunting." Of Skye, Scalpay, Raasay, and Harris also, other quaint notices of similar character are to be found in his works.

From this period onwards till the commencement of the present century the deer forests of Scotland are everywhere mentioned ; and it is interesting to note that many of the most extensive forests of the present time, such as Athole, Mar, Gaich, Glenfeshie, Black Mount, Jura, and Harris, are precisely those of which special mention is made by ancient authorities.



HINDS

From a photograph by Geoffrey Millais.

In the sixteenth century King James V. seems to have done his hunting in Scotland on quite a respectable scale. We read that he

made proclamation to all lords, barons, gentlemen, landwardmen, and freeholders to compear at Edinburgh with a month's victual to pass with the king to danton (subdue) the thieves of Teviotdale, etc.; and also warned all gentlemen that had good dogs to bring them, that he might hunt in the said country. The Earl of Argyle, the Earl of Huntley, the Earl of Atholl, *and all the rest of the Highlands*, did, and brought their hounds with them to hunt with the king. His Majesty therefore passed out of Edinburgh with

12,000 men, and hounded and hawked all the country and bounds, and killed eighteen score harts. Next summer he went to hunt in Athol, accompanied by Queen Margaret and the Pope's Ambassador, where he remained three days most nobly entertained by the Earl, and killed thirty score of hart and hynd, with other small beasts, as roe and roebuck, wolf and fox, and wild cats.

A little later on, Queen Mary of Scotland hunted with equal pomp and circumstance. Of her most famous hunt minute particulars are given by Barclay, who says that on this notable occasion scouts were sent out to gather the deer in, not only in Athole but in Mar, Badenoch, and Moray, and that the result was 360 deer, 5 wolves, and some roes.



DEER SWIMMING A LOCH

Showing the manner in which the heads are raised when approaching shallows.

To-day it is estimated that there are over 2,000,000 acres devoted to the maintenance of deer in Scotland, and that about 5000 stags are annually killed. The deer forests number 111, exclusive of those that have been formed since 1883; and according to Mr. Grimble they are distributed as follows: Aberdeenshire, 5; Argyleshire, 8; Banffshire, 2; Buteshire, 1; Caithness-shire, 1; Forfarshire, 3; Inverness-shire, 39; Perthshire, 8; Ross-shire, 38; and Sutherlandshire, 6. Of these, Mr. Malcolm tells us, 20 were formed prior to 1800, 59 from 1800 to 1872, and 30 from 1872 to 1883. And now 21 more forests must be added to the account, for since 1883 estates to that number have been cleared of sheep and are now let as forests to sportsmen, who are glad to take what they can get in that way so near at home.

And now for a little wander away into the bypaths of natural history, for, as I have said before, my special desire is to avoid here (as I have endeavoured to do in previous publications) the beaten track of previous writers. The ordinary habits of wild deer have been already portrayed *usque ad nauseam* by men who know all about them and men who do not; and nowhere are they more admirably set forth than in Mr. Grimble's *Deer-Stalking* and Mr. Collyns's *Chase of the Wild Red Deer*, the former dealing with deer in Scotland, and the latter with deer in England. There is no need, therefore, to burden the world with another treatise on the subject.

How does a stag swim? That is one of the many points on which old and experienced

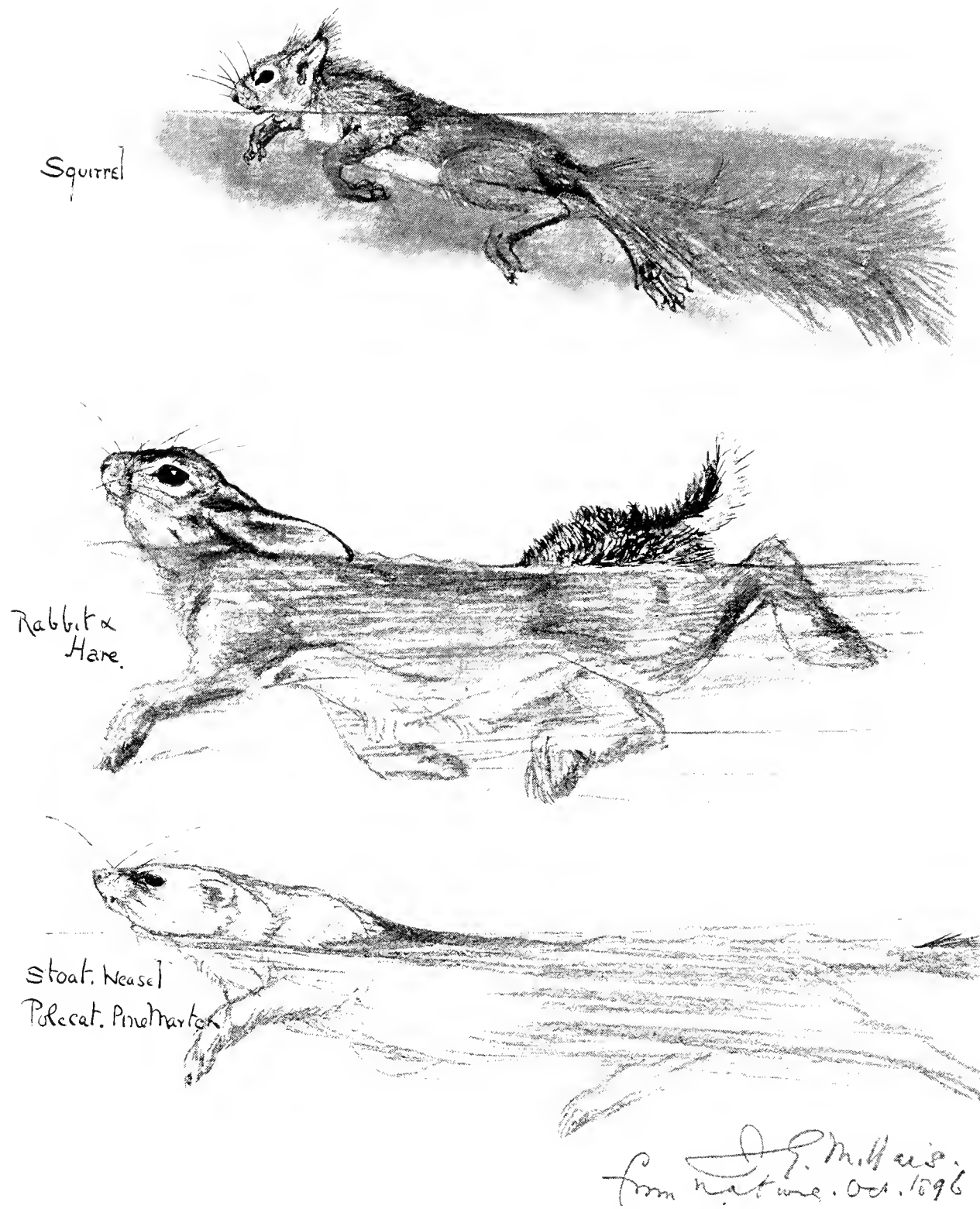


"TO PASS ELSEWHERE"

stalkers disagree. During two seasons, when doing a good deal of stalking, I made it my business to ask this question of each of my companions on the hill, and their answers were about equally opposed, one half asserting that only the head and upper part of the neck are held clear of the water, while the other half insisted that the whole line of the back and shoulders appears above the surface; only one man, and he by far the most experienced and observant stalker, said candidly he did not know, though he had seen them swimming scores of times. For my part, I feel sure that in deep water, especially when in for a long-distance swim, a stag shows nothing but his head, his mouth being just clear of the water, and that only on coming into the shallows preparatory to landing can any part of his body be seen. But the point is, I think, worth clearing up.¹

¹ In the *Art of Venerie* is the following quaint note on this subject: "When the harts passe the greates ryvers, or some arme of the sea, to go to rut in some ile or forest, they assemble themselves in great hearde, and knowing which of them is strongest and best swimmer, they make him go foremost, and then he which cometh next him stayeth up his heade upon the back of the

Then, how does a hare swim? a rabbit, a squirrel, or a stoat? One hot day in August 1894, while lazily smoking my pipe in the beautiful Stobhall woods that overlook the famous stretch of the Tay, Mr. James Pullar had kindly given me a day on his water, and that "pipe of peace" (or piece of pipe, for it was but a remnant of its former self) seemed specially sweet after lunch, for I had caught a splendid clean-run fish of 36 lbs. and two grilse that very morning in Eels Brig stream. And now a hare, running down the opposite bank of the river on Taymount property, attracted my attention, and I watched him with keen



VARIOUS BRITISH ANIMALS SWIMMING, AND THEIR POSITIONS IN THE WATER

interest, for, continuing his easy canter to the edge of the river, he plunged in without a moment's halt and made straight for the middle of the stream. I had never before seen a hare voluntarily take to a big sheet of water, and in this case the stream was both heavy and rapid. Until half-way across he was apparently going strong and well, but on encountering the full force of the current he seemed to lose heart, and suddenly turned back. Landing again about 30 yards below the starting-point, he cantered along the stones nearly 50 yards farther up the river and again launched himself in the rough water. This time he was borne down rapidly, although straining every nerve to avoid this, and again (when he could most

first, and the thyrd upon the backe of the second, and consequently al the reste do in like manner, to the end that the one may relieve the other, and when the first is wearie another taketh his place."

easily have reached the Stobhall side) he turned and swam back, after which he galloped away out of sight. What struck me as most curious was the way in which he carried himself during this swimming feat, the forepart of the body being depressed almost below the surface of the water, while the stern appeared above it. The more he used his hind legs, the lower went his head, dipping down at every stroke; so how the creature could escape drowning in anything like rough water is more than I can say.

Roe I have frequently seen swim, and am convinced that at such times their immersion in the water is deeper than that of almost any other animal. The whole of the body and most of the neck are submerged, the head alone being carried well clear of the water, and all the higher when forging forward under the influence of fear or excitement.

The stoat, the polecat, and the weasel are all very powerful swimmers, and their position in the water is akin to that adopted by nearly all the mammalia, excepting that they move forward with the head and shoulders higher out of the water than other creatures, whilst the line of the back and tail are just on the surface. The rabbit is the same as the hare, and is a *stern-wheeler*, for he propels himself along with a certain slowness and deliberation. The head is just above water as well as, curiously enough, the whole of the rump and tail, whilst the hocks of the hind legs appear above the surface as he takes each fresh stroke.

For so small an animal the squirrel is a rapid swimmer, and the angle at which the body is held is as curious as that of the rabbit. In his case most of the work is done with the fore legs, which beat the water with scurry and rapidity. The hind legs and tail sink far down below the surface¹ and appear to impede the progress. I doubt if the squirrel could undertake a swim of any great distance, and that is probably why they often prefer to cross rivers on pieces of driftwood, as I have seen them do.

For the purpose of obtaining accurate pictures of the various modes in which the above animals swim, I had live specimens caught, and then rowed alongside them for some distance until I had made correct outline sketches. We all know how the rats, mice, and otters swim, so I do not think it necessary to figure them. All animals, too, which are frequently in the water have the power of elevating or depressing the body at will.

The seeing powers of red deer are doubtless excellent, but unless the object they are looking at is in process of movement, they are, I think, in this matter but little, if at all, superior to man. They are also inferior in this respect to roe and fallow deer, and infinitely so to the various surface-feeding ducks and wild geese. Every stalker has had wild deer staring him in the face, in full view within 8 or 10 yards, without their finding out that he was a man until he began to move. Roe, of course, will do the same, but if there is the very smallest movement on the part of the stalker (I am speaking of the

¹ Whilst on the subject of swimming, a curious thing happened one day in December 1891 when I was shooting at Foyers, on the Loch Ness side. A wood along the loch-side was being driven, and there were a nice lot of birds coming forward. Just at the end some twenty pheasants rose, and five or six of them, instead of coming on or breaking back, attempted to cross the lake, which was like a sheet of glass. They could not, however, manage it, as the distance to Glen Urquhart was over a mile, and we saw them all alight on the water three-quarters of the way across. The stupid birds, however, instead of swimming the last few hundred yards to safety, immediately turned homewards to the Foyers side again, and were met half-way across by the boat that had been sent to pick them up.

few places where roe are regularly stalked in the sportsmanlike manner they deserve) they will dash off at once, whilst the larger animal will commonly "bide a wee," to make sure whether the thing in front of him is really as dangerous as it looks. Till 1888 my experience with roe lay almost entirely in heavily-wooded districts, where the animals are seldom seen in the open except when crossing from one plantation to another; but since that time I have had many opportunities for seeing them in open ground where red deer were likewise numerous, and have been immensely struck with their keen powers of



GETTING THE WIND

observation. With stags one could venture to take a certain degree of liberty which no old roebuck in his senses would stand for a moment.

Anent the sight and senses of deer there is a tale about Landseer which, so far as I am aware, has not yet appeared in print. It was told me by Mr. Henry Wells, R.A., who, as an eye-witness, can vouch for the truth of the story. Many years ago—in the old days before Ardverikie Lodge was burnt down, and with it so many things of interest—Mr. Wells and Sir Edwin were guests in the house during the stalking season. On wet days, when out-door enjoyment was impossible, the latter commonly amused himself by making charcoal drawings on the walls—drawings that were the admiration of all future visitors, and particularly interesting as showing the great artist's first conceptions of pictures, such as "The Stag at Bay," "The Challenge," and "The Sanctuary," which have since become so famous.¹ One of these days, however, Sir Edwin devoted to the completion of

¹ By a piece of good fortune a photographer from Grantown visited Ardverikie shortly before its destruction by fire in 1871, and took copies of the principal drawings on the walls. These plates were some time ago purchased by Sir George Macpherson Grant, and to his kindness I am indebted for being allowed to reproduce them here.



*The Series of Drawings by Sir Edwin Landseer
which graced the walls of Ashburton Lodge, previous to its destruction by fire in 1874.
(By kind permission of Sir George Moncreiff, Bart.)*

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a forest scene that he had witnessed a short time before. In the foreground was a nice lot of those thumping stags he knew so well how to depict. They were all comfortably feeding, and the stalkers coming down the hill-side in the background seemed to have it all their own way, but for one old hind in the centre of the picture, whose suspicions were keenly aroused, and who, if she gave the alarm, would carry off with her in a trice all those fat harts. Everything seemed right in the picture, but Sir Edwin, who believed much in local expert criticism, called for Donald, one of the stalkers, a man of strong individuality and caustic humour. Donald then came into the hall and began to stalk that picture. His experienced eye grasped the situation at once. At the first glance he saw the point of danger, and then, like a good stalker, he examined every nook and cranny in the landscape where another outlying beast might possibly be found equally threatening to spoil the sport. He took such a time over this that Sir Edwin at last pulled him up, asking what he thought of the picture, upon which Donald marched up in front of the central point of interest and, shaking his fist fiercely in the face of the old lady on guard, hissed, "Yon auld deil o' a hind, she's jist putten' her noo-as into the air to *see* what she can *hear*"—as pretty a hash of idioms as one could well desire.

The cunning of a stag is considerable, particularly when he has reached his prime. By that time he has learned to gauge degrees of danger, and knows something of the habits of man—his protector and his slayer. Look, for instance, at the way in which he turns to his own advantage the eyes and ears of some younger male of his own race. Like other creatures one could mention, he knows the luxury of a "fag," and takes care to furnish himself with one as soon as may be. No one who has watched one of these cunning old fellows enjoying the maximum of food and rest with a minimum of danger can fail to be struck with the reasoning power of an animal who can thus appropriate the senses of another and make him feel the truth of the proverb "Might is right." During the time that his lord is feeding the fag has to keep incessantly on the watch, or he will quickly be recalled to a sense of his duties in a way he is not likely to forget. A gentleman who hunts regularly with the Devon and Somerset staghounds told me that on one occasion he was posted at the top of a wood about to be drawn, in which had been harboured a big stag and his fag. He saw the stag and the brocket started by the tufters in the middle of the wood, and they galloped up the hill towards him. Then, just as both appeared to be on the point of breaking cover, the big stag drove the brocket out of the wood, and without showing himself on the outskirts, suddenly plunged back into the cover in front of the hounds, which were now in full cry, and was seen by another huntsman to go and lie down in the bed just vacated by the fag. There is no doubt these old stags are in the habit of using their fags as scapegoats.



"YON AULD DEIL O' A HIND"

Charles Palk Collyns, the Dulverton surgeon who hunted with the Devon and Somerset staghounds for no less than forty-six years, has given us by far the best account of the wild English deer that has yet been written. On page 57 of his excellent book, *The Chase of the Wild Red Deer*, he says, speaking of his own experience—

A fat old stag was found on Haddon, near Dulverton, in 1839. He was well known, and had frequently baffled all attempts made to capture him. He resorted, when found, to his usual stratagem, which he had often adopted before with success, of beating the covert, turning out younger deer, and lying down in their beds. On the day in question he did this three times, but his wily tricks were

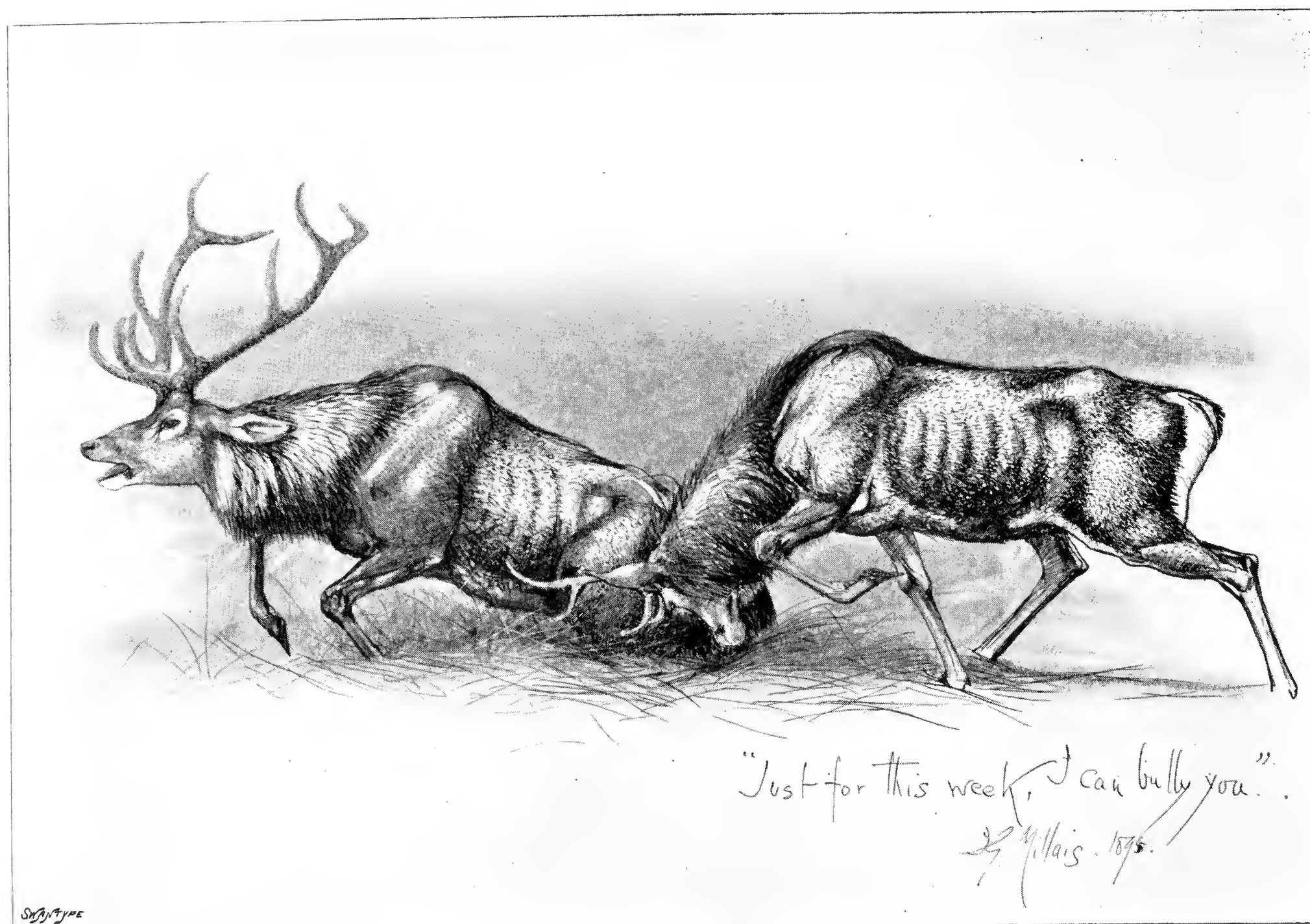


THE BEST IN THE FOREST WITH HIS FAG ON THE WATCH

known, and in each instance the pack were stopped and brought back on him. Finding his tactics useless, he broke covert and made an effort to reach Brendon Hill, towards Dunster, but failed, and came back for Baron's Down, near Dulverton. After running for some time about the coverts he again broke for Stockham, thence through Pixton Park, and down to water on the Barle at Perry Farm, above Exbridge. Here in a deep hole, under cover of the roots of an overhanging elder-tree, he sank himself in the river, leaving only his nose above water. His place of concealment was artfully chosen. The pack must have been frequently round and close to him, but he lay fast, and, night coming on, the chase was abandoned. Very shortly after the hounds had left, a labouring man went down with a net to fish the river, and at his first cast poked the stag from his hiding-place. The man was dragged across the river, the deer, no doubt, having entangled one of his hind legs in the net. The poor fisherman was so frightened that he forthwith started for his cottage, and arrived there, as his wife said, "quite wisht." My professional services were called in aid, and I elicited from him that his state was caused by fright.

He stated how he had been dragged across the river, and then with a fearful sigh said, "It was the devil, zur ; I do know it ; I zeed his *cloven foot*."¹

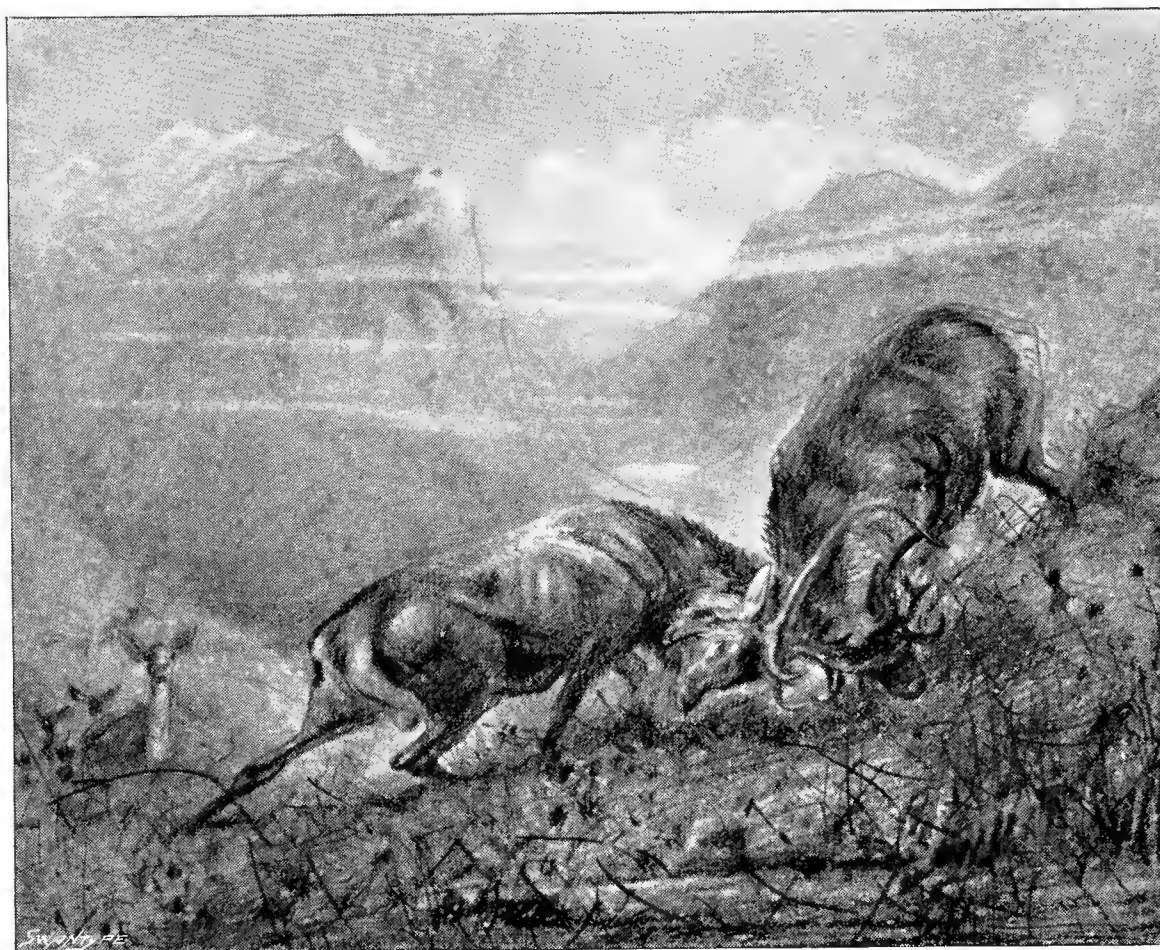
One bright October morning in 1890 I was lying on the upper slopes of Corrie Guisachan, Black Mount, with John M^cLeish. We had been watching for nearly two hours the two master stags of the beat facing each other, each with his harem of some sixty or



A young stag, whose horns are clean, will frequently use them to his own advantage on larger animals that have not begun to strip.

¹ "Cinqfoil," writing to the *Field*, 3rd October 1896, gives some extremely interesting notes on stag cunning which he witnessed a few days previously when out with his Devon and Somerset staghounds. After describing the finding of two good stags he says : "As they slowly sauntered up a sheep track on the far side, they became aware of a horseman just above them. They stopped, looked round, gave two bounds in the air, and instantly disappeared. A couple of tufters were now running merrily on the line up the sheep track ; they overran it, but, not having a crowd of horses thundering along behind them, stopped instantly and cast up the hill, but could make nothing of it. It was very pretty to watch them as they circled twice round the little patch of furze bushes and withered fern not 50 yards wide. Then they plunged in and began questing under each bush and tuft. For some moments they could make nothing of it, till one hound stopped suddenly and stood a moment almost like a pointer, and then dashed forward, when up jumped a stag close before him and went away over the brow of the hill. The other hound was still busy round and round a patch of thorns, and at last he forced out the other stag, who quickly followed his comrade. It was as good an example of how close a deer can lie, even in so scanty a covert as withered fern and straggling gorse. It, indeed, seemed to justify the assertion made in old books that, when crouched, a stag can in some way control his scent by holding his breath. Be that as it may, here, on a good scenting morning, were two stags lying within a few feet of hounds, and they were some appreciable time in winding them. I have often heard it asserted that wild animals choose the colour of the ground to match their own coats when lying close, and remember to have read a denial of that habit in an article, I think, in the *Badminton Magazine* lately. I will not venture to enter into such a discussion, but here it was worth observing that the two stags varied greatly in colour—one was a bright red tawny colour, the other quite a dusky brown, probably with mud from a soiling pit, and that the bright-coloured deer couched in the withered fern, which was an exact match, while the darker stag lay down among some stunted thorn bushes. I draw no inference ; I only give the fact for what it is worth."

seventy hinds. I had never before seen two master stags in that attitude, and the sight was indeed a grand one, for the corrie was full of deer. One of these stags, an 11-pointer, seemed anxious to fight, but was so worried with the importunities of outlying cavaliers that it was as much as he could do to keep his wives together. At last he could stand it no longer, so, to get ready for business, he rounded up his fair ones with almost the dexterity of a collie collecting sheep, and drove them before him out of the corrie. Now



STAGS FIGHTING

was my chance, suggested M'Leish, if I cared to risk a moving shot at the 11-pointer instead of firing at an old stag lying some 70 yards below us in the most tempting position; and as the herd disappeared from view my companion pointed out the rock under which they would pass. A quick run along the hill-side soon brought me there, and, looking over the edge, I saw the whole herd rushing down the hill and spreading out like an open fan. That is not the sort of shot that I care about, or could often expect to make successfully;



ROUSED

but the fickle goddess was kind that day, and at the touch of my trigger the big stag showed he was hit, as with laboured efforts he left the hinds, and, turning back, made for the stream at the foot of the corrie. Seeing how matters stood, M'Leish at once despatched his little collie, who went yapping down the hill to bay the stag and bring matters to a conclusion. But presently the doggie stopped,

and when I arrived breathless he was sitting contentedly gazing into a turbid pool where the waters were foaming like a torrent of Bass's pale ale. Nothing could be seen of the stag, nor should I have discovered his whereabouts had he not moved his black horns with their gleaming points. There he was, however, hidden right under an overhanging peat hag, with only his eyes, nose, and horns above water, and I could now claim him as "my beautiful, my own." Even a practised eye might have passed the spot a

hundred times without dreaming that so large a creature could possibly be concealed there.

The cunning of an old stag is perhaps most manifest during the period when his horns are growing. The animals seem to know that at this season they are safe from molestation, for in selecting a summer lair they will frequently fix upon a place in close proximity to the haunts of men, and there they will make their home until the end of the "close" season, when away they go in search of "fresh fields and pastures new." Often enough their haunt will be found in a small wood or spinney near the stalker's house, an instance of which is fresh in my memory. For several seasons a little fir wood about 100 yards square, and barely 200 yards from the stalker's house at Kiltarlity, was frequented by a very big stag that always changed its quarters for Boblainey Wood as soon as its horns were



A SOILING POOL

clean. Johnnie Ross (the stalker) often spoke to me of this cunning old fellow who had so long eluded the wiles of his pursuers, and one evening, returning from roe-stalking, we saw him approach the covert. At first, when a considerable distance away, he moved with slow and stealthy steps, looking carefully around to see that the coast was clear, but as he drew near he suddenly dashed down the hill at full speed and entered the wood. Ross said that at daybreak he always left the covert in the same manner, these big stags evidently fancying that their resting-places will not be marked if they appear to rush past them.

A big Eskadale stag, with whom I had something more than a bowing acquaintance, was particularly cute in his selection of a summer home. He chose the lovely island in the Beaully known as Ailean Aigas, and Miss Dove, who has tenanted the house for some years, told me he came there regularly for four seasons, always leaving on the 1st of August. The river rushes wildly past this exquisite little rock island, which is not many hundred yards round, and the stag used to swim across every morning at daybreak to feed in the

Eskadale woods, lying sometimes in the corn-fields during the day, but swimming back to his island home at night. During a visit to Ailean Aigas early in August 1891, I found the fern banks on the top of the island literally covered with his beds, whilst the steep descent on either side to the river was worked into regular paths by his hoofs. Of his further history I shall have something to say later on.

The weird, wild, yawning roar of the stag is certainly one of the grandest sounds in Nature, and when heard for the first time makes an impression not easily forgotten; but to compare it, as so many do, with the roar of a lion is simply absurd.¹ The voice of the lion is immeasurably louder, grander, and farther-reaching, and I think it is due only to the natural advantages the stag enjoys in its usual environment of echoing hills and dales that this comparison has ever been made. I had a fine opportunity of testing the actual power of the lion's roar in the autumn of 1894, and again in 1895, while staying with my people in their Highland home on the hill of Kinnoul, above the fair city of Perth—a city which, I may say, lies in a hole surrounded by hills on three sides. To Perth one day came Bostock's menagerie, and with it two splendid lions, who, at intervals during the day, did their best to alarm the inhabitants and inform them the show had begun, by an exhibition of their vocal powers in full blast. Now a lion's "best" in the roaring line is quite a different thing from the moan or subdued roar one generally hears in the wilds of Africa; so here was a chance for finding out how far their voices could be heard, and on this quest I presently set out. Mounting to the top of Kinnoul Hill—a distance in a bee-line of two miles—I found the sound there loud and strong; then following the line of the hills which run parallel to the Tay down the Carse o' Gowrie, a walk of two miles farther brought me to Kinfauns, where the sounds were still loud, and there could be no question as to the animals that were emitting them. Another two miles took me to Glen Carse, where, as I stood on the station platform, I could distinctly hear the now subdued sounds still coming from Perth. Glen Carse is in the flat, and six miles from the South Inch of Perth, where the caravans stood; one may therefore fairly assume that at a higher elevation still farther away the roaring could be distinctly heard. In 1895, when the menagerie revisited Perth, I again heard the lions roar at a distance of six miles. Now I maintain that on a still day no stag in existence could make itself heard so far away,² and I doubt very much whether, amidst the hum and hubbub of the busy city of Perth, with its tuneful steam whistles and other factory appliances constantly "on the go," its roar would reach much (if any) farther than from the rendezvous of the menagerie to the top of Kinnoul Hill.

March and April are the fatal months for deer, for they do not, as a rule, succumb during great privations, but afterwards. Extremes of climate affect deer very much. A continuously wet season upsets their stomachs, and a very dry one, besides being bad for calving, drives them to the mountain-tops, where, though they escape the flies, they find only poor and wiry grass, the consumption of which generates inferior heads. This was well seen in the wonderful season of 1893. In the favoured region of the Northern forests

¹ It is not perhaps generally known that a stag when suddenly frightened will bark loudly, and will gallop away, continuing to bark at intervals. The noise emitted is much louder than that made by the hind.

² It is only on very still autumn days that I can hear the stags roaring in Warnham, a distance from my house of two miles.

the deer flourished as they had never done before both in horn and body, while at Black Mount and other forests farther south, where hardly any rain fell during the summer, the heads were of the poorest description, though in other respects the condition of the animals was fairly good.

In a thunderstorm deer are apt to be stricken with panic, when they will rush madly about, running together in little groups as if for mutual comfort and counsel in their



HINDS COMING INTO SHELTER BEFORE A STORM

desperation at finding no means of escape. In gusty weather, too, with frequent squalls, they are often unapproachable, keeping constantly on the move.

The first severe weather of winter will move the entire stock of deer from the outlying beats in a forest into some big corrie or wood where there is shelter. Such a sight was witnessed by my friend, Mr. Sydney Steel, whilst hind-stalking in Glentilt in November 1892. Several hundreds of deer were already there, and when the snowstorm commenced, the passes leading into the great corrie were being used all day by long strings of hinds seeking shelter. By the evening the stalkers who were with him (and these men are not commonly given to exaggeration) estimated that there were not less than 3000 deer in the valley, which probably constituted pretty nearly the whole stock of deer in Blair-Athole.

It will be noticed too that when suffering from bad weather deer generally vary their altitude in proportion to its severity, as was seen in the severe winter of 1893, when many

came to an untimely end. At Black Mount alone some fifty stags were found lying dead by the side of Loch Tulla.

The shyness of deer is proverbial, and yet, like other animals, they learn in time that novelties are not necessarily enemies in disguise. The driver of a donkey engine on the West Highland line, when that railway was being constructed through the Rannoch district, told me some interesting facts as to the way in which they gradually got accustomed to the trains. At first they would move clear away off the sky-line when the engine was at work, so great was their horror of the noise and steam. In time, however, the deer would even feed within sight, though never descending to the flats till nightfall. As months went by they gradually began to accept the trains as inevitable horrors, which, however, never moved off a certain track, and at last they ventured to cross under the line by means of the culverts. Now, I am told, deer are constantly seen on the Rannoch and Black Mount flats, feeding within 100 yards of the line, and merely raising their heads as the engine goes puffing by.

Of deep sleep—that “gentle thing beloved from pole to pole”—deer seem to have little or no experience. Rarely indeed are they found fast asleep; but James M‘Cook, stalker at Ben Alder, once actually caught hold of a hind in that condition.

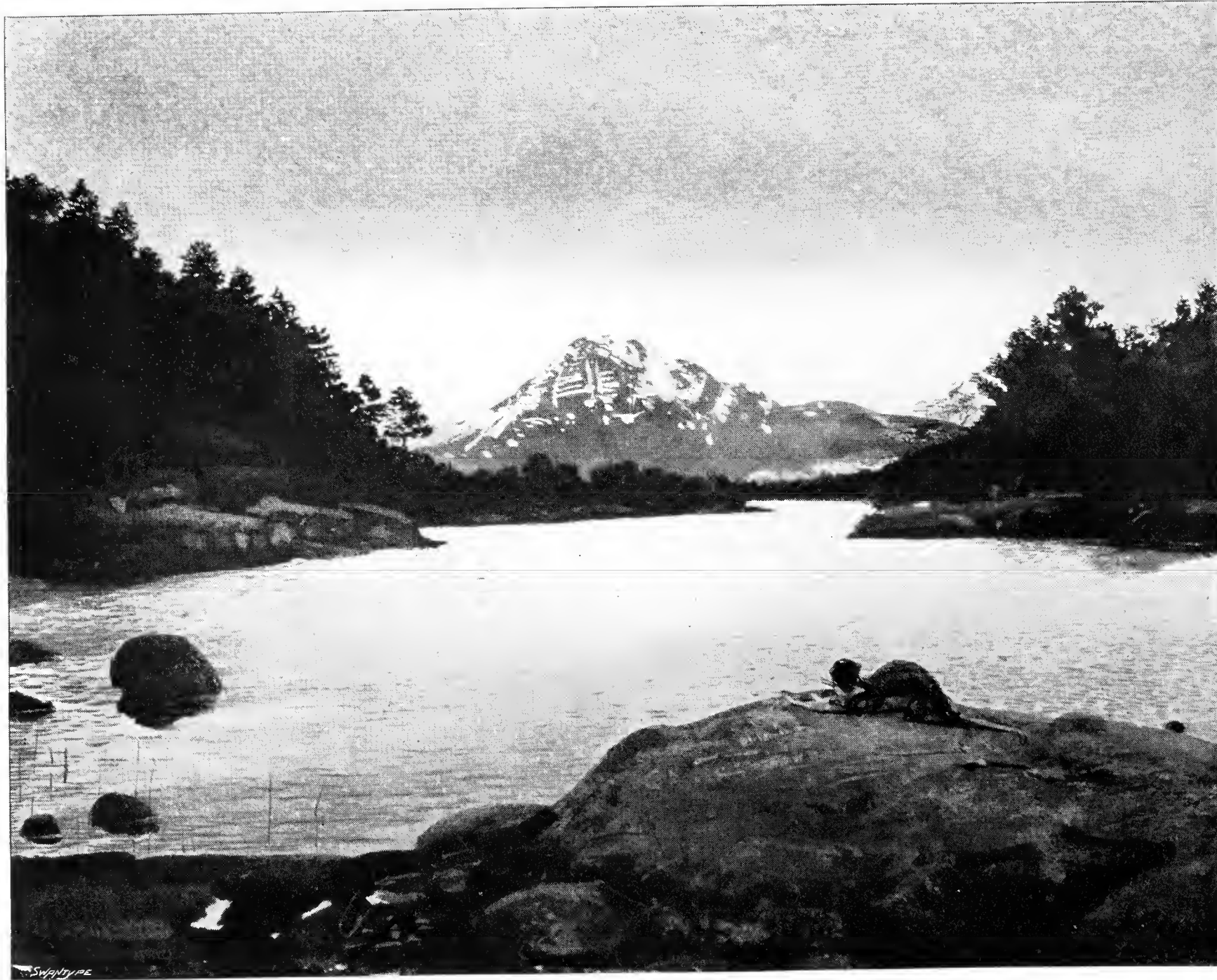
As to length of life there is some difference of opinion, but, *malgré* numerous old Highland adages implying that deer and eagles live for ever, most foresters of experience are now agreed that from twenty to thirty years is the limit of a stag’s life, whilst eighteen years are about as much as a park stag ever attains to. Stags in parks commonly begin to deteriorate at thirteen years, and in many cases show signs of age, such as rotten horn tops and weak brows, as early as twelve. Wild deer, however, doubtless owing to their greater hardihood, facilities for exercise, and more frugal living, seldom show any falling-off in horn or body till over fourteen or fifteen years. Their age limit may be reckoned as much the same as that of the horse. In 1863 some twenty deer were brought over from Arisaig by S. Ross, the present keeper at Ardnamurchan, and, after being marked, were let loose in that forest; and in 1881 Mr. A. Burn Murdoch, while shooting there, killed a very old stag with one horn, which proved to be one of the animals so turned down, and therefore at least twenty-nine years old. On the other hand, I have seen a park stag bearing all the marks of age, such as poor quarters, rotten tops, insignificant brows, and decayed teeth, at fourteen years of age. Twenty years is the greatest age I have known a park hind live to, and the animal in question was only skin and bone, as all her teeth were done for.

An interesting note with regard to the age of a hind is furnished in Mr. Henry Evans’s excellent notes on the wild deer of Jura. He says—

One of these hinds had very peculiar ears. She was rather tame, and was seen constantly. Twenty-two years ago she was a large hind with a good calf at her side. In November 1889 she broke her neck by falling down some rocks. She was then looking ragged and feeble, but had a calf at her side. She reared twenty calves during the period of twenty-one years’ observation, has gone geld (or lost her calf) only once during that long period, viz. the year before her death. She must have been no less than five years old when first observed, for she was then a large hind with a good calf at her side. Consequently we cannot set her down at less than twenty-six at her death. Her last calf died. *This hind had a complete set of teeth.*

We know now that horns offer no signs by which we can determine age. Certainly

for the first few years of life under wild conditions the head of a stag should follow a regular course, but even then so many variations occur to the contrary that form or points are no test.¹ It is only by a study of the animal's dentition that we can arrive at anything like accuracy, and then only up to maturity, which we may roughly place at six years. At one year of age red deer of both sexes have two cutting teeth in the lower jaw ; at two years they have four ; at three years six ; and at four years eight. At five years of age stags have two



THE DRINKING POOL, INVEREWE, ROSS, N.B.

tusks in the upper jaw. Very old hinds also are sometimes furnished with these two tusks, though they are generally smaller. Old stags often have their front teeth missing and the grinders decayed and worn away. They are then generally in very poor condition ; not so hinds, whose teeth are perfect even to old age as a rule.

Until recent times, and before the rifle played such an important part in the destruction of deer, many curiously-devised traps were in existence for capturing them, particularly in the extreme north of Scotland, whereby many deer could be caught at once. The herds were driven up the hills between two stone dykes set wide apart at the entrance, and then gradually contracting till they ended in a *cul de sac*. The remains of some of these traps are still to be seen on Little Ben Griam in Sutherlandshire, and in the Dunrobin Forest.

¹ A stag in good condition, provided the season is one conducive to good horn-growth, should have his best head at twelve years of age.

Come we now to the golden eagle—a bird sedulously encouraged and protected by the owners of deer forests, *malgré* the bad character it bears as an inveterate foe of the deer tribe. This grand creature, without which no forest can nowadays be called complete, certainly takes considerable toll from among the young calves, and, when he gets the chance, will frequently kill them when they are well grown. As a rule, however, the hinds are such excellent mothers and guardians that, after their young are able to follow them, it is only by cutting them off from their protectors that the bird is successful in his forays. A golden eagle will sometimes wait for hours together on a bunch of hinds with their calves in the hope of getting a calf separated from its mother, but rarely, if ever, I fancy, will it attack the mother or any calf within her reach, having far too wholesome a dread of the fire and accuracy with which she can use her forelegs. At such times—when danger threatens—the courage of the hinds and the sagacity they display in defence of their young are quite astonishing. I was told by the head stalkers on two different forests, who assured me they had seen what they described, that a hind noticing an eagle on the look-out from a neighbouring rock drove her calf off to another mother and left it in her care, while she herself pluckily charged straight up to the eagle and attempted to strike it.

But perhaps some one may suggest that my informants were (in the learned words of a Yankee spiritualist) "*docti arcum intendere longum.*" Not a bit of it. I knew the men well enough to rely implicitly on their statements, and, moreover, my own experience goes far to confirm them. In July 1894, with the kind permission of Lord Breadalbane, Mr. Steel and I were making studies of deer in the forest of Black Mount, and sitting one day on the ridge of a hill above Inveroran, in view of some hinds with calves on the opposite hill, I suddenly spied an eagle coming towards them, and evidently bent on food. As the bird (an old female, judging from her size and the colour of her tail feathers) approached the deer we distinctly saw the latter bunch together in a little group, with their calves by their sides. The great bird kept sailing round and round close above them, and once made a distinct stoop as if to try and scare them, but without success. Presently it swept down close to the ground some thirty yards away from the deer, apparently with the intention of alighting, when one of the hinds made a rush towards the bird, which, however, again swung upwards and continued soaring around as before. Altogether the eagle must have remained some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour over the deer whilst we were watching, till, apparently concluding that the game was not worth the candle, she sailed away farther up the corrie, where we saw her later on beating the hill-side for blue hares.

As to full-grown hinds without "encumbrances" (as children are lovingly called in Christian advertisements), so unusual is it for eagles to molest them that, as a rule, they regard the bird with absolute indifference, hardly raising their heads as they lie and chew the cud while an eagle passes over within a few feet of them. But the rule has its exceptions. This year (1896) Mr. George Henderson tells me he was stalking one day in Cannacroch, when he saw an eagle pass just over the heads of a big herd that was lying. The animals took no notice whatever, but after going some distance the great bird returned towards them, when the whole herd rose instantaneously and packed together, evidently

in great fear. The eagle now began to sail round and round above them, and presently appeared to make a false stoop at one of the hinds, whereupon the whole of the deer dashed off helter-skelter as fast as ever their legs could carry them, and went right out of the corrie and over the sky-line without stopping. Mr. Henderson, who is a stalker of experience, says he has never seen deer go so fast or appear so thoroughly scared when moved by man or other causes.

In that inexpressibly wild and grand forest of Black Mount, where eagles are now



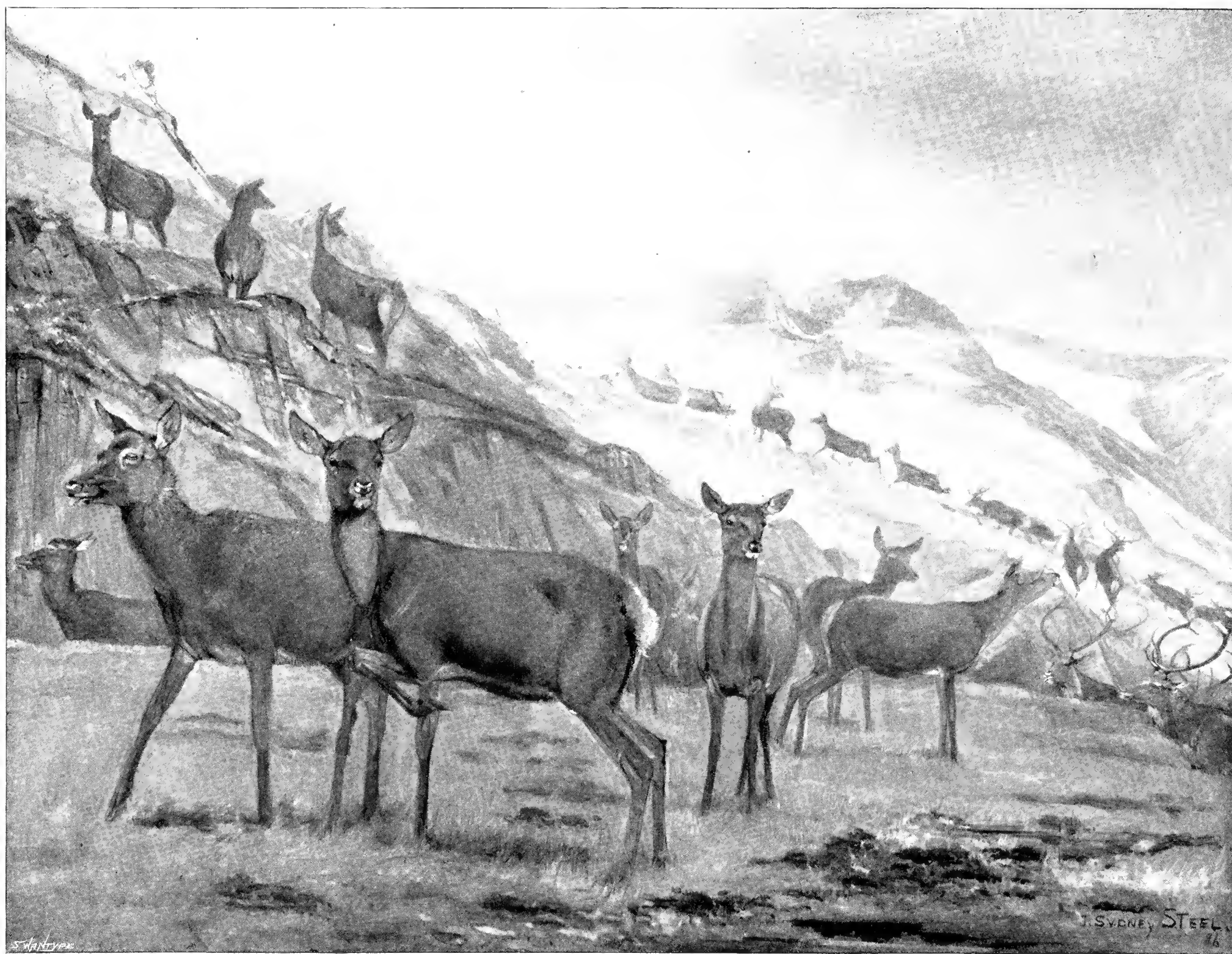
HOW THE GOLDEN EAGLE SOMETIMES GETS A DINNER

common objects, is a narrow pass on the precipitous slopes of Clashven much used by the deer in winter, and a hundred feet or so below this pass James M'Coll, the stalker on this beat, has found several carcasses and skeletons of hinds,¹ which he maintains were driven over by the eagles. One winter day, when passing up the big glen which lies at the foot of Clashven, he saw an eagle stoop at a hind and nearly, but not quite, knock her off the pass. Happily, after a violent struggle, it regained its foothold, or it would undoubtedly have been dashed to pieces on the rocks beneath.

But that an eagle will ever attack a full-grown stag in the autumn I must confess I

¹ I am told that there is a similar spot in the Reay forest where hinds are annually killed by eagles.

do not believe, notwithstanding the fact that some years ago a sensational account of such a scene appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, accompanied by an excellent drawing by the late Burton Barber. The strength and activity of a stag are more than a match for the strongest man, as has been unhappily proved more than once. It is hardly likely, therefore, that a bird weighing only some 12 to 15 lbs., and incapable of giving a shock like a falcon, could hold on to such an adversary when fairly roused. But the sensational



A DRIVE

is what the public love both in literature and in art, or such a canvas as Landseer's "The Swannery invaded by Eagles" could hardly be taken *au sérieux*.

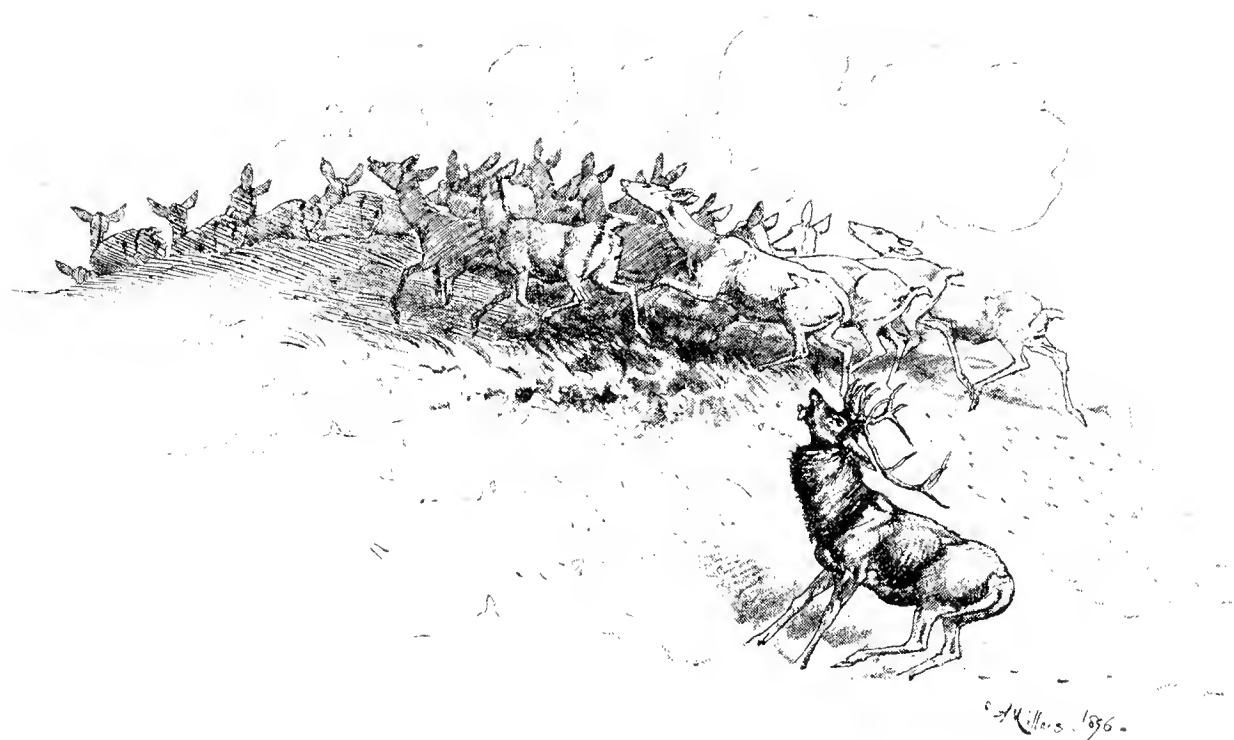
Without doubt the golden eagle is the grandest of all our feathered tribe, and its marked increase during the last few years is a source of real enjoyment to all sportsmen who appreciate the beauties of nature. One day in October 1894 I saw five all together soaring in circles above Ben Toig, and my brother Geoff tells me that in the same year he and a stalker disturbed six from the precipice in Corrie Arder (Ardverikie), the scene of Landseer's "Eagle's Nest."

The bird that really requires protection now in Scotland is the raven, which in most districts is rapidly becoming extinct. In 1895 I wanted a freshly-killed specimen for a

picture on which I was then engaged, but though Mr. Macleay most kindly wrote to some twenty keepers, and took infinite trouble to supply my want, the bird and I never came together till it was too late.

My old friend, Mr. J. E. Harting, sends me the following interesting note with regard to a herd of red deer from a single hind. It is in the form of a letter addressed to Sir William Flower by Mr. J. A. Houblon of Hallingbury Park, Bishop-Stortford.

A red deer hind was hunted by Mr. Petre's hounds into this neighbourhood and lost in 1875. I was walking soon afterwards in the forest (Hatfield Broad Oak) when I saw the hind with a male calf at her feet. Since 1877 she has had one calf every year except one, though no stag except her own offspring has been seen in the forest since she was lost and left there. Two young harts got drowned on going to drink at a muddy place from which they were unable to extricate themselves. In 1881 we killed and ate a five-year-old stag thus reared, and another last year (1886). The heads of these are good average heads, and are now hung up in our hall. They have each of them ten



SHOT THROUGH THE LUNGS

points, and neither of them showed any signs of degeneracy that we could perceive. There are now (28th May 1887) five red deer in Hatfield Broad Oak Forest, all of them sprung, as we believe, from this solitary hind.

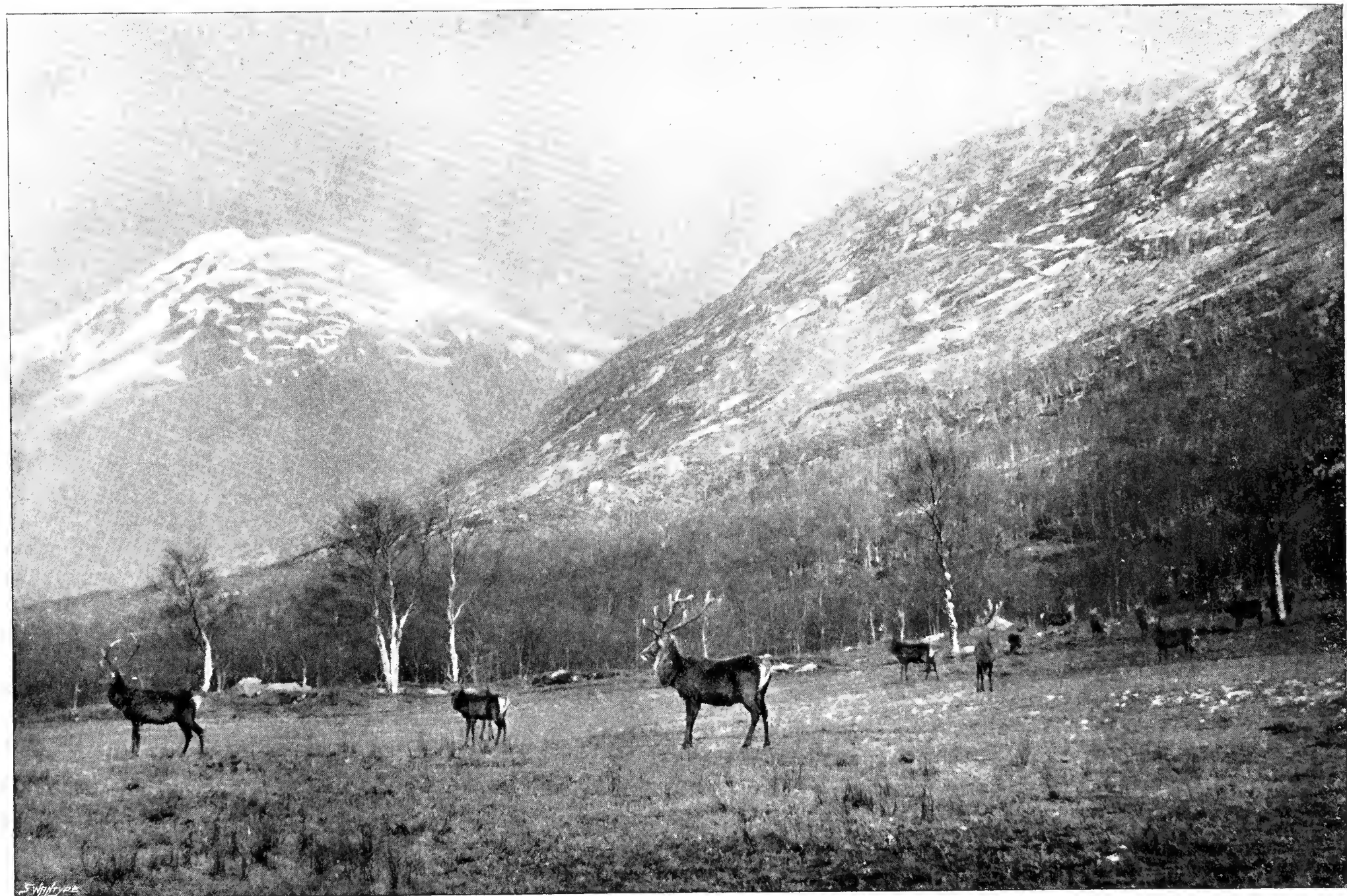
A very interesting note appeared in the *Field* for 12th September 1896, contributed by Mr. P. H. Grimshaw, on the parasites which affect deer. Very few of us know much about these disagreeable creatures, and in fact it was not till June 1894 that any observer had discovered that the wild red deer had a large bot-fly, which was the exclusive parasite of the red deer. Mr. P. H. Grimshaw thus describes the fly which is known to naturalists as *Cephenomyia rufibarbis*.

The red deer bot-fly is a very handsome insect, and, though a true fly, is quite bee-like in appearance. It measures nearly three-quarters of an inch in length, and is thickly clothed over the whole body with long silky hairs. Like all other flies, it may be easily distinguished from a bee by its possessing only one pair of wings. The head is black, but clothed behind with yellowish hairs. The face is silvery in certain lights, while on the lower part it has a beautiful tuft of reddish-yellow hairs, a feature which gives rise to its scientific name of *rufibarbis*, or "red-bearded."

Mr. Grimshaw goes on to quote the graphic account which Friedrich Brauer, the

German entomologist and authority on this group of flies, gives as to the manner in which the fly effects the deposition of its grubs or maggots in the nostrils of its victim. In quoting this account he continues :—

He was fortunate in witnessing the attack of some females upon a herd of deer, and has given a graphic account of the way in which the fly effects the deposition of its grubs or maggots in the nostrils of its victim. He witnessed the process on a hot, sunny day in May, just after a thunderstorm, with the air calm and sultry. The insects were flying about the heads of the deer in the hot sunshine, circling noiselessly round and round in a vertical direction. The poor quadruped follows the enemy



THE BIG STAG OF GLEN ETTIVE

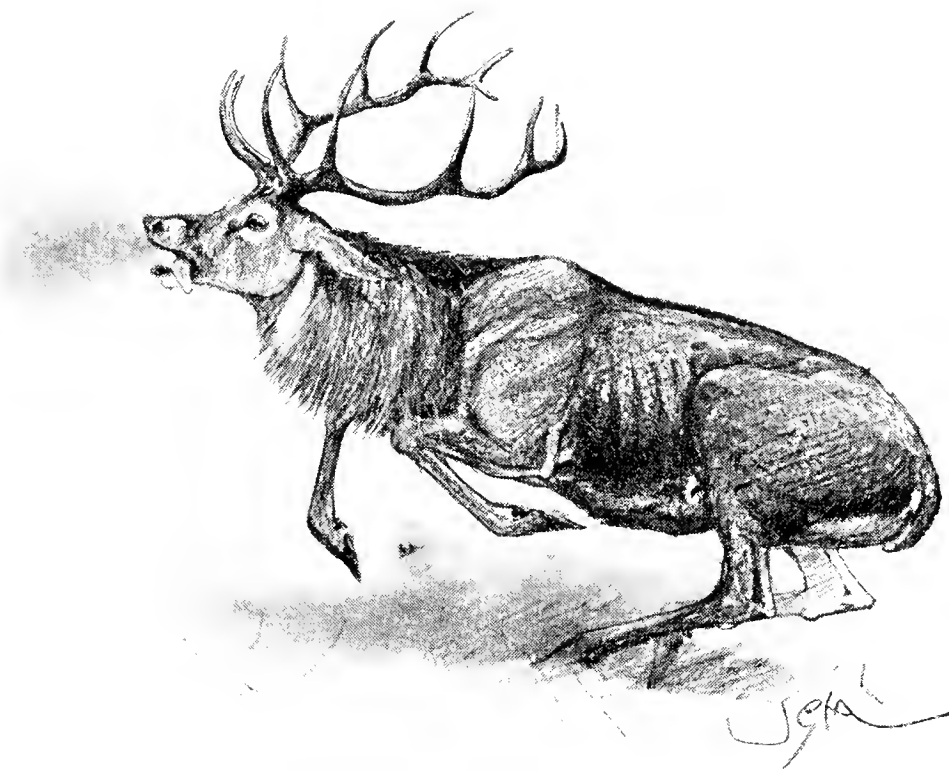
Photograph of wild deer taken from nature in the forest of the Black Mount.

with its eye, and begins to stamp and snort indignantly. Suddenly the fly flings itself down upon the open nostril of its victim, not, however, to remain there, but only to fly off again and repeat this irritating process time after time. The deer begins now to sneeze violently and to kick, shaking its head up and down between its outstretched legs, or rubbing its nose with its hind feet in its endeavours to soothe the irritation. Sometimes the little pest is dashed to the ground by the forcible sneezing of the deer, but only to rise again and fly slowly away, to repeat the attack on some other member of the herd. Sometimes in this way a single fly will produce a marked effect upon the whole herd, for they are seen to prick their ears, lift up their heads in alarm, and close their nostrils. As a consequence of the successive visits of the fly, first to one and then to another of the frightened animals, there commences quite a strange movement in the herd—the snorting and stamping pass through it in a peculiar rhythmical manner, three or four times, until either the insect is satisfied and

leaves the poor beasts, or they scamper off to take refuge under some neighbouring trees, or in any other deep shady place, where the flies do not follow them.

The deer have indeed good cause to dread the approach of one of these bee-like bot-flies, for, on coming close to the nostrils, it squirts out a drop of fluid containing minute, active maggots. These adhere firmly to the tender skin by means of hooks provided for the purpose, and, when once attached, they are exceedingly difficult to get rid of. By means of the hooks these troublesome maggots wriggle themselves onwards until they come to lie at the back of the throat, all the while feeding on the mucus resulting from the irritation, and increasing in size until they attain the length of an inch, or even an inch and a half. The fully-developed maggots are of a dirty yellow colour, with the upper border of the last segment of the body yellowish brown, and the head and tenth segment marked above with small dark spots. They are finally ejected from the throat by the coughing and sneezing of their host, when they fall to the ground, and enter the quiet pupal stage of their existence, becoming pupae from half a day to two days after being ejected. This stage lasts from twenty-one to forty days, but in colder weather it is much longer before the fully-developed fly emerges.

Roe deer, fallow deer, reindeer, and elk are each troubled by a species of bot-fly belonging to the same genus, and having a similar life-history. Red deer and roe are also attacked by a parasite resembling the dreaded ox-warble, for an account of which I must refer my readers again to Mr. Grimshaw's article.



SHOT THROUGH THE HEART

CHAPTER IV

FIELD NOTES AND STALKING YARNS

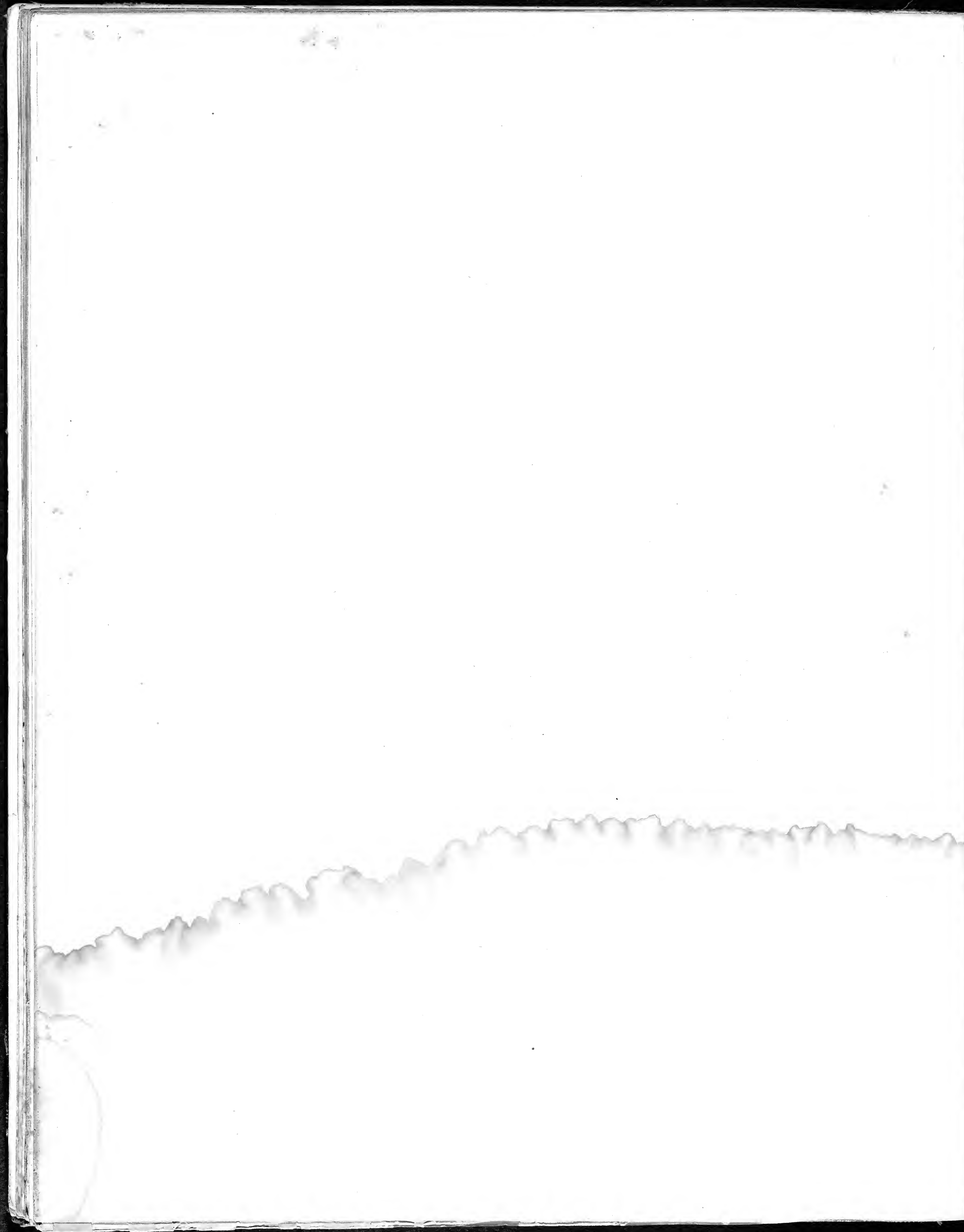
It is generally agreed amongst those of us who are devoted to sport with the rifle that the greatest pleasure of the modern chase is that of stalking a really wild animal that has been previously spied in an open, rugged, and mountainous country, with all its attendant incidents and varying chances of failure or success. This sport in its highest form is only to be had with the various wild goats and sheep of Europe, Asia, and America, and as these highly sensitive creatures are gifted with powers of sight and hearing far superior to those of the stag, he who means to succeed with them must be prepared for long and toilsome journeys, and a perseverance in pursuit equal at least to that of Sherlock Holmes. If he is not so armed, let him content himself at home, as he well may do if privileged to pursue the stag in any of our wild Northern forests. "Oh, but," says Mr. Superfine Sciolist, "who would care to shoot poor beasts mewed up within an enclosure of seven-strand wire fencing?" A sneer of the ignorant, but it is never heard from men who know what deer-stalking really is in any of the wide and ample ranges of Scotland. There the deer have fair play, for no lasting popularity could ever attach to any sport in this country where such is not practised, and sometimes happy is the man who can point to even one dead animal as the result of a week's hard stalking. He need not be ashamed of his work, however skilled he may be in the stalker's art. On the other hand, a well-known Russian sportsman with whom I was dining recently had just come from the North, where he had rented one of those small sheep-pen forests in Inverness-shire, and he was immensely disgusted with the ease and luxury of sport "as made in Scotland," accustomed as he was to the pursuit of big game, with its comparatively few chances. "Ah!" said he, with scornful emphasis, "it is absurd; it is slaughter. Why, *you get three shots every day!*"

I think it says a good deal for the genuineness and healthy tone of Scotch deer-stalking that no professionalism has, or ever can, pervade the sport. If we look into the annals of the past, we shall see how, instead of its degenerating or becoming less manly, it is conducted to-day on infinitely more sportsmanlike lines than at any previous period. Three hundred years ago great drives were the fashion; the animals, confined within a small space, were brought within easy reach and practically butchered at a short range, a form of amusement for which even the poverty of the weapons of that day was hardly a sufficient



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excuse. Sixty years ago the stalk was conducted very much as it is to-day, but if a shot failed, a deerhound was slipped, and generally brought the uninjured quarry to bay in some burn or loch, where he was put an end to with a rifle. And so it was down to a much later period.

A stalker in Black Mount told me of a typical day's sport in which he took part some forty years ago. Fox Maule and Sir Edwin Landseer were the two rifles (they frequently stalked in pairs at that time), and on the side of Clashven, Peter Robertson, the head forester,



THE FIRST BREATH OF WINTER

brought them within 80 yards of two exceptionally fine stags. Maule fired and missed, as did also Sir Edwin as the stags moved away; then, on a signal from Robertson, Peter M'Coll, the gillie, slipped the hounds—the two best ever owned by the late Marquis of Breadalbane, and whose portraits are still preserved in the famous picture of "The Deer Drive,"—and away they went in hot pursuit of the deer. An end-on chase now ensued, the line taken being due east down the great glen towards Loch Dochart, and at last the stalkers were brought to a standstill, being fairly exhausted both in wind and limb. At this moment, however, four dark spots like small rocks standing out at the point of a little promontory in the lake attracted their attention, and, on drawing nearer, they saw, to their

surprise, each of the big stags being held at bay by a gallant hound. A couple of shots then settled the business ; and so ended what was then considered a grand day's sport. No doubt it was most exciting to see the struggle of bone and sinew between two such noble quadrupeds, but it was not rifle-shooting. To-day the gallant but disturbing deerhound has given place to the cunning and obedient collie, and the success of the stalker depends for the most part on the accuracy of his rifle, and his skill in using it.

It is pleasant to note that, whatever may happen in other sports, there is no such thing as favouritism in deer-stalking. It does not matter in the least whether you are Mr. Smith



WAIT A BIT, THE BEST IS GENERALLY LAST

or the Duke of Bayswater ; in a properly-conducted forest you will be treated in exactly the same way by Donald, for in his view you are simply "the man with the rifle," and in estimating your worth he will look only to your achievements as a sportsman. One bad miss on the part of a Duke will lower him at once in the eyes of his critic, while one good shot by Mr. Smith will elevate him over the head of his unlucky companion, no matter how many stars and garters he may be entitled to wear. Witness the following instance.

A certain great personage whose name is a household word had a day's stalking in a Perthshire forest. The head stalker, a particularly grim but zealous follower of his craft, had given his "man" two easy chances, and the bullets had flown wide. A third chance even easier than the others, at a big stag whose presence in the larder was eagerly desired,

proved equally disastrous, and the day's proceedings ended in a blank. The head stalker's stock of patience was exhausted, and three miserable men trudged down the hill towards the forester's lodge, within a few hundred yards of which were feeding the usual lot of tame hinds. And now the head stalker found himself short of something more than patience, for on catching sight of these semi-domesticated hinds the great man, who had seen no deer that day save those that were pointed out to him, exclaimed with great excitement, "There they are! Don't you see them?" and promptly squatted on the ground preparing for the fray. The head stalker's measure of his "man" was now complete. Without deigning to

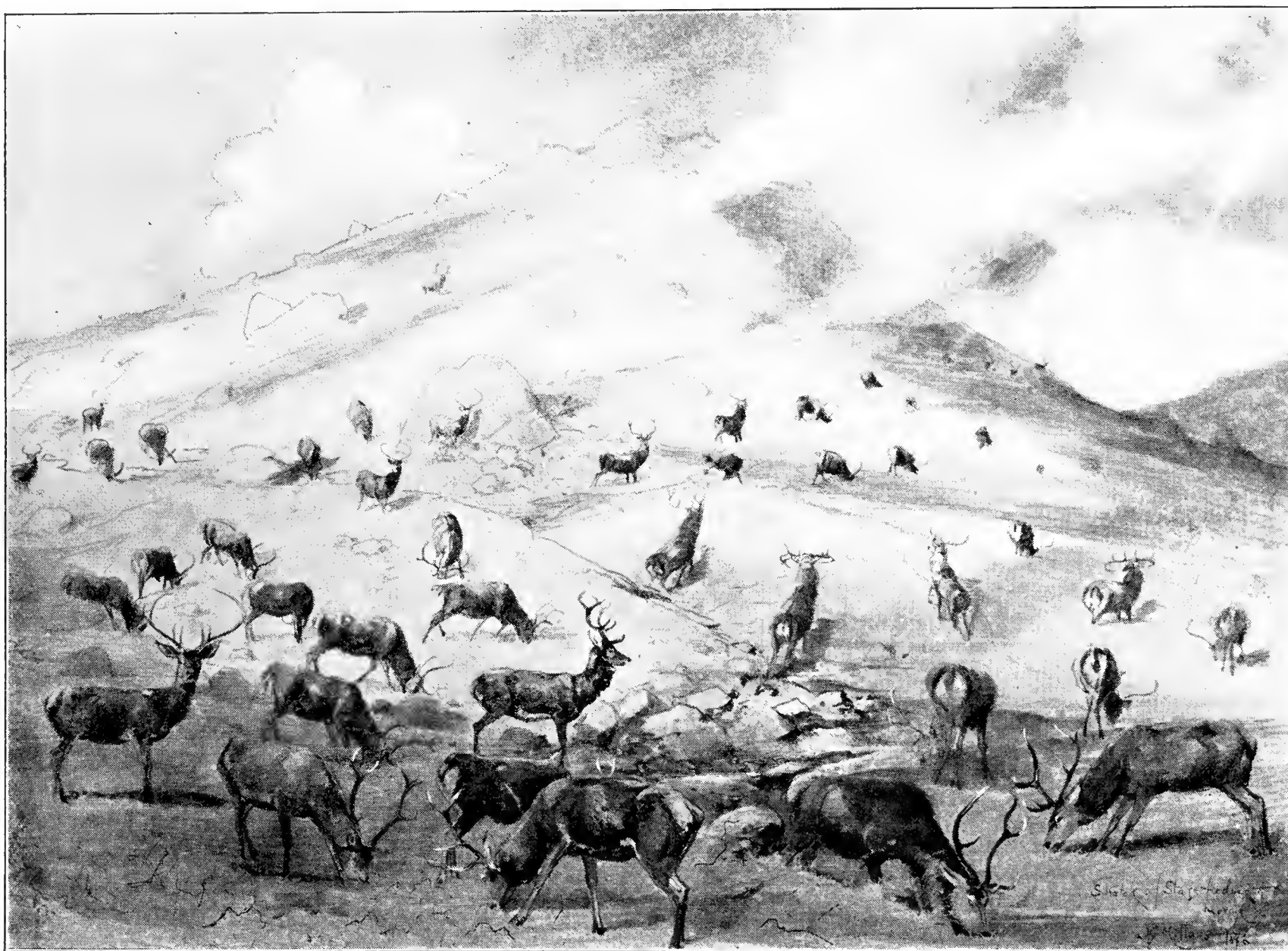


A HIND CHARGING AT AN EAGLE THAT HAS ALIGHTED NEAR HER CALF

reply, he turned round to the gillie in attendance and said quietly, "Puir bit mannie, he disna ken ony better," and away he walked.

A word as to the crofter question—with all apologies for a parenthesis hardly to be avoided. Years ago, it will be remembered, there was a loud outcry by the crofters that they were being eaten up by the extension of the forests in Scotland, and no doubt at the commencement of the movement considerable suffering was occasioned in this way. But, happily, we have little of this nowadays. Assisted emigration and the general reduction of rents in the crofter districts have done much to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry; and but for the feeble bleating of a few philanthropists, who credit their hearts with a softness that is largely due to their heads, we should probably hear no more about it. What these good gentlemen ask is that certain forests should be laid waste, or (as they put it) restored to cultivation. But what would be the good of that? Nine-tenths of the deer

grounds of Scotland are far too poor to be cultivated to advantage in these (so-called) Free Trade days, and as to the other tenth, it is more than doubtful whether the poorer inhabitants would not lose more than they would gain by the change. For, think of the money that is spent in keeping up these forests, of the labour employed in maintaining and repairing buildings, roads, fences, etc., and of the golden stream that flows into the pockets of the people day by day so long as My Lord or Mr. Moneybags is in residence. Much is expected of the man who rents a forest in Scotland, and rarely, if ever, is the expectation disappointed. He may count himself lucky who during the stalking season escapes with an expenditure of less than £50 a day. Ladies too come over, if the tenant is worthy of



STAGS FEEDING AS THEY MOVE

their companionship, and their gracious presence does no small good in uniting both rich and poor, the Sassenach and the Highlander, in the bonds of sincere affection. Set these things against the contingencies of farming in these Northern wilds, where for long periods in the year "the rain it raineth every day," and where at best the ruling prices of stock and crop leave but a scanty profit, and see if the balance does not turn in the direction I have suggested. Whatever it may be elsewhere, in Scotland most certainly the little farmer's lot, like the policeman's, "is not a happy one."

With the afforesting of so many sheep grounds and the introduction of wire fences during the past fifteen years there has been an enormous increase in the number of deer in Scotland. Quality has given place to quantity; and though there are nearly as good stags killed now as in the previous fifty years, with a few exceptions the best heads do not come from these highly-stocked forests.

In the great deer forest country stretching from Beaully to the west coast Mr. Winans is probably responsible for the fact that the animals have increased threefold during his tenancy. In Mar, Athole, and Black Mount deer are still on the increase, whilst to the north—in Wyvis, Inchbae, Strathvaick, Braemore, Kinloch-Luichart, Fannich, Dundonnell, and Letterewe—there is an immense stock of deer, which are every year degenerating. In Strathvaick there are probably more deer to the acre than in any other forest in Scotland, and Mr. Williams annually shoots about 115 stags. Whilst on the way to Dundonnell forest in 1891 I drove along the road from Garve which runs parallel to the long hill of Strathvaick, and there I saw the largest assemblage of wild deer that has ever come under my eye. One of Mr. Williams's stalkers, with whom I got into conversation at Aultguish Inn, estimated the number then within sight at 1700, and as I drove on towards the Braemore march I saw some 400 or 500 more that were probably out of his view. The formation of these great herds has one serious drawback to the tenant: it causes the best stags, from the stalker's point of view, to desert the district and move to isolated situations on the sheep grounds or in the big woods, where their natural cunning stands them in good stead.

From 1889 to 1894 Mr. Winans's princely domain in the North remained undisturbed by the sound of a rifle, and amongst Northern sportsmen speculation was rife as to the number of noble harts that must have reached their prime and be wandering unscathed through his various forests. At Fort George in Inverness-shire, where I was then quartered, one heard all the local gossip about these forests, and the wild speculation as to the sport to be had there. "Great heavens! what grand heads I could get had I this or that forest just for one year," was the exclamation of many a keen stalker, and when in 1893 a large piece in the very heart of Mr. Winans's country became vacant, competition for it was simply fierce. In the end it fell to a certain Mr. L., a keen sportsman, a first-class shot, and a man who knows a good head when he sees it. Poor fellow, he hoped to fill his walls in that one season with trophies such as few could boast, but, alas! his first day's stalking dashed these hopes to the ground. There were stags enough and to spare, and plenty of big ones among them, but all so abominably tame that they never moved even when he showed himself within 150 yards of them; and as to their heads, not a single good one was to be seen. A second day proved just as bad as the first. By the end of it he had been all over the ground, and having satisfied himself that there was not a good head in the forest, he quickly shot his number and left the place in disgust.

Kintail is an example of a forest which, according to the prevailing wind, is at times full of deer, and at other times may not yield a single good head in a whole season. At any time, as its home stock is comparatively small, but few stags find their way there from other forests, but those that do come are generally first-rate animals. For some years previous to 1894 very little was done at Kintail, but in that good season many big stags selected it as their summer ground. It was then in the hands of one of the best stalkers and shots of this country—Sir Edmund Loder—and during the season he won to his own rifle perhaps the finest lot of heads that has fallen to any one man during the past ten years. Nearly all of these fine stags were found singly, or with only one or two companions. The best head, a magnificent 10-pointer, which adorns the smoking-room at

Leonardslee, is one of the finest recent heads I have seen. Sir Edmund killed the stag late one evening at a distance of 300 yards, and though in falling over a precipice the horns were torn away from the skull, they were fortunately uninjured.

Old sportsmen may sneer as they like at the fine heads of the present day as the result of excessive artificial feeding (there are always plenty of these *laudatores temporis acti*), but they forget that a hundred years ago, when deer were only about one-fiftieth of their present number, they enjoyed advantages unknown to most of our existing herds. They had practically an unlimited range, good feeding, and (what is at least of equal importance) good winter shelter. However severe the weather, there were the woods to cover them, but only in about one half of our forests do we find any such protection now. It is a crying



THAT CONFOUNDED GROUSE

shame that deer should be so treated, left too (as they often are) without sufficient food when the pasturage falls short, for none of them are hardy enough to stand this treatment without suffering, and in the limited ranges of to-day they cannot forage for themselves. Lord Burton, who was one of the first to introduce a proper system of feeding in his forest at Glenquoich, has done more than any other owner to improve the deer of the north-west of Scotland. Mr. William Macleay (now, alas! departed) used to call him "the stalker's benefactor," for not only are the Glenquoich deer about the best in the North, but they have undoubtedly improved the stock in the neighbouring forests.

It is interesting to notice the curious effects of bullets on a stag, particularly when the animal is shot right through the heart. Every stalker knows how differently deer act under the shock of this particular shot. One animal will drop almost dead on the spot, while others will run any distance up to 300 yards. As a rule the stag bolts off at full speed, and

as the heart is unable to force the blood to the extremities of the body—the head and the fore and hind legs—these gradually give way and become paralysed. Occasionally one hears of extraordinary results, such as paralysis of only one part. The present Lord Tweedmouth was stalking one day with James Grant in Larig Dochart (Black Mount)—a great open corrie ending in a *cul de sac*, where the wind is always “kittle.” The stalkers had made four distinct moves after a particularly wide-awake stag, and on each occasion had been completely baffled. However, in the evening the stag threw the game into his pursuers’



“SPEAKS, AND, IN ACCENTS DISCONSOLATE, ANSWERS THE WAIL OF THE FOREST”

hands by walking up to them and presenting a nice broadside at 80 yards. At the shot the stag’s hind quarters fell, and he struggled along on his fore feet like an animal “haunched.” “Weel,” said Grant, “I think, Mr. Marjerrybanks” (the stalkers always pronounce the family name like that), “that’ll jist be five shullens to the butcher.” Now Lord Tweedmouth is one of the best rifle-shots in Scotland, and he naturally supposed there must be something wrong, as he knew he had not pulled off, and that the shot was a good one. The stag was still standing up in front as they ran up, but almost immediately fell over and died. The bullet, it was found, had passed right through the centre of the heart, and Grant, who told me this, said he had never seen or heard of a similar instance.

Taking the whole of the stags killed in Scotland, the average weight in any one season

does not reach 13 stone.¹ In some forests it ranges from 14 to 21 stone, but in most 12 to 17 stone is the weight of a stag. In the Duke of Hamilton's forest in the Isle of Arran the average weight is far heavier than anywhere on the mainland. Park stags were introduced into Arran about the year 1850. The largest of them (which, strange to say, carried the finest head ever seen there) was killed by Mr. H. Padwick in September 1872. It weighed 28 stone 6 lbs. clean.

The old wood stags of Perthshire and the deer of Beaufort woods still frequently reach 25 stone, and the big stag of 30 stone 2 lbs. clean, killed by Col. the Hon. Alastair Fraser at the last-named place, is the heaviest Scotch stag of which I have any note. The statistics of the northern deer and those of north-western forests and many adjacent islands show a distinctly lower average of weight. A stag killed at Berriedale by the Duke of Portland, 3rd October 1890—the largest taken in that forest for some years past—weighed 22 stone 4 lbs., while the biggest killed at Black Mount in the present Marquis of Breadalbane's time weighed 21 stone. Formerly, even in the late Lord Dudley's tenancy, the Black Mount deer were not to be surpassed by any in Scotland. The great drives, however, which were latterly much in vogue in that forest did much to clear off the best of the great stags, and though the forest has since been most carefully worked, both in Mr. Daniel Cooper's time and in that of the present owner, the deer are still inferior to their old form, both in body and head. I think that the change in the quality of the pasturage has much to do with it, for all the high grazing ground to which the deer naturally resort in the warm months is now becoming excessively poor, the grass being long and rank. A wonderful contrast this to the grazing on Ben Alder, but a few miles to the east. Here is a forest that has not received anything like the attention paid to Black Mount, and has changed hands again and again during the last few years, and yet, with the exception of a few bad years, the deer always scale well there and carry far better heads than the Black Mount animals. The last twenty stags killed in Black Mount in 1894 scaled on an average 14 stone, whilst the last twenty killed by Lord Ilchester on Ben Alder in the same year showed an average of 16 stone.

And now will my readers forgive a yarn or two about the Highland stalker? He is a man worth studying, and, judging from those I have met, a good fellow and a pleasant companion. His intense love of the sport and the grand poetical surroundings of his home could hardly fail to make him so unless he be of such common clay that the beauties of nature and the healthful pursuit of his calling have no effect upon him. There may, of course, be such men, for there are "bad uns" in all grades and professions. Intensely practical is he, quaint and courteous, and though plain-spoken to a degree hardly permissible perhaps to other men, his speech is characteristic of himself, and as no offence is meant, none is ever taken. Sir Edmund Loder tells some good stories about his old stalker, John Ross, who was with the family for many years at Amot. Amongst other pursuits, Sir Edmund is given to botany, in which he takes great delight, and his rock garden at Leonardslee is famous. One season he was making a collection of mountain plants for this garden, and while out stalking he spent more time poking about amongst the rocks looking

¹ The height at shoulder of a good Scotch stag is about 42 inches, and the length from nose to tail along the back about 68 inches.

for specimens than Ross considered desirable. The idea of any man in his senses paying even a moment's attention to such trifles when deer were in view was to him incomprehensible, and shortly afterwards he let his master know this at the usual interview after breakfast. "Weel, Sir Edmund, is it to be stā-alkin' or scrā-atchin' the day?" At another time his opinion of England after a short visit was summed up in a few words. At Christmas one of his old masters, Sir Greville Smythe, had entertained him right royally with beef and plum pudding, and coming on to Leonardslee, Sir Edmund Loder took him a sharp walk up and down the hill that skirts the valley of his wild-beast preserve—one of the few hills in un-rugged Sussex. "Well, what do you think of England now, Johnnie?" said his



IN RAGS AND TATTERS. WILD STAGS, AUGUST

host. "Oh!" replied the old stalker, blowing like a grampus, after a fortnight's inaction and high feeding, "I didna expect to see the groond ri-isin' and fā-allin' so much."

In the old days of the solid bullet it frequently happened that the stalker, in firing at a stag with other beasts standing behind it, killed a hind or a staggie as well, and in Northern forests these unwarrantable beasts were generally given as perquisites to the stalkers. A friend of mine, who had a bit of Glen Strathfarrar, took to using the more fatal explosive bullets when they were first introduced. His forester, however, never lost an opportunity for deprecating their use, and at last his master asked him point-blank why he objected to them. The truth then leaked out. Donald was thinking of his perquisites, and, driven into a corner, could hardly escape confessing it. "Aweel ye see, sur," he said, "there's nae possible chance o' kullin' twa." Another dry speech of his is worth recalling. He was out

one day with an impetuous youth who, on missing an easy shot at a stag, proceeded to bombard it at several hundred yards' distance as it ran unscathed up a hill towards the march. Donald had, of course, previously spied his neighbour's ground, and it was gall and bitterness to him to know that the party from the adjoining forest was even at that very moment watching them. "I wudna shute ony mair if a' was ye," he said, placing his hand quietly on the smoking rifle, "ye *might* kull him abin the mairch."

Away now to Black Mount, of which I have said some little in previous pages. Here is a deer forest worth talking about—the largest, I believe, in the North—covering as it does some 90,000 acres of the fair county of Argyle; and surely nowhere else in all Scotland is grander, wilder, or more exquisite scenery to be found. Loch Maree and the rough forests away to the north-west of it are superb, as are also parts of Ardverikie, Loch More, and western Argyleshire, but to my mind they are, one and all, surpassed in grandeur by the magnificent high passes and corries of Black Mount.

On a fine day in October, standing on the rough summit of Altahourn or Ben Starab, one seems lost in a surrounding sea of mountains, which stretch without a break in serried masses away to the west coast. Deer fences are but little used here, and the children of the forest wander over this vast domain with almost all their pristine freedom. The owner, the present Marquis of Breadalbane, is himself a keen stalker; it is the one sport that he really loves, and, "like master, like man," his foresters are as fine and hard-working a lot as any to be found in the North. Every man on the place knows his work, and does it, the game is plentiful, and the whole *entourage* a scene of wildest beauty. He must, indeed, be but a poor sort of sportsman who fails to find enjoyment here. I can speak from experience, and it is no mere compliment to say that to his kindness and that of Lady Breadalbane I owe some of the happiest days of my life. Sir Edwin Landseer was constantly there in the late Lord Breadalbane's time, as well as during the tenancy of Lord Dudley, who followed; and one sees from the number of pictures he painted from sketches taken in the forest how much he thought of its scenery and its sport. "The Stag at Bay" records a true incident of that forest. A fine deer was slightly wounded on Ben Toig and two hounds were slipped after him. One of them the hart struck dead as it galloped beside him, so another hound was let go, and this second couple took the stag down into Loch Tulla, where they held him at bay close to the Forest Lodge. The older of the two hounds, however, attempted to seize the stag by the ear in the water, on which he also received his *coup de grâce*. Sir Edwin, who was in the house at the time, ran out and was a witness of the final tragedy. "The Deer Drive" was another picture sketched in there, the scene being taken from the high pass between Altahourn and Larig Dochart, a spot where the present Lord Tweedmouth and the late Lord Dudley killed no fewer than nineteen big stags at one drive. Black Mount also furnished the subject of "The Torrent" and many more of Sir Edwin's famous forest pictures.

When I was there, old John M'Leish, than whom there is no finer stalker in Scotland,¹ was the only man on the place who could remember Landseer well, and he was not very

¹ During the season 1892 this remarkable stalker's average was exceptional. Out of twenty-three stalks made on his beat only one went wrong, owing to the deer having moved. Of the other twenty-two the various rifles all obtained their shots and twenty-two stags were killed. Though this would be good shooting for any single sportsman, it is remarkable that, with six or seven different men shooting, every stag should have been grassed. As every sportsman will know, his success lies in the way the stalker brings his man up to the firing point, and without undue haste gives him a fair chance.

communicative, but his description of the great painter's personality was rather quaint. "Oh ay, I mind him fine; he was a nice wee mannie, and he carried a braw rifle." Sir Edwin, I may say, was one of the first to be armed with a breechloader.

Mr. Grimble's *Deer-Stalking* is a work which I would strongly recommend to intending stalkers as containing everything that the tyro should know before proceeding to the hill. There are plenty of other works on the subject, but none so good as this. Old stalkers, of course, do not require such books. After two or three seasons' experience they know, or ought to know, everything that is to be learnt about the sport, and very few of them would ever think of looking into a text-book; but I never yet knew a stalker who was not fond of pictures, books, or papers that served to recall his own happy experiences on the hills of bonnie Scotland.

Let me give from my diary a short account of two weeks' stalking as typical examples of the ups and downs of this grand sport, remarking in advance that the state of the weather and the cunning way in which the deer tribe manage to avoid points of danger make it practically impossible at times for even the best stalkers to score. The uninitiated may hardly believe this, seeing that in most forests the game is so numerous, but old stalkers know such times well, and dread them, as the season is so short.

The first week was one of exceptionally good luck, for I was on an outside beat, where, owing to the difficulties of pony service and the distance from headquarters, Black Mount Forest Lodge, I could not expect to kill more than one stag a day. Moreover, two days out of the six were occupied in tramping to and from the little iron house at Glen Kinglass.

Tuesday, 3rd October.—Started at 9 A.M. with old M'Leish for the high Snowy-carries beat, but the weather coming on thick, as usual, we had to remain at a lower level. Just below the mist, in Inverguisachan, we came on a fine light-coloured stag, moving towards us with twelve or fourteen hinds. The wind, however, was wrong, and he passed away above, giving the alarm as he did so to a much better stag, with about twenty-five hinds, that was lying unseen amongst some rocks at the foot of the narrow corrie. They also immediately headed for a pass on the opposite hill a few hundred yards above us, but we easily intercepted them, and I got a long shot at about 170 yards up-hill, which fortunately took the stag in the right place. He left the hinds at once, galloped about 100 yards down-hill, and rolled over dead. Weight 16 stone 2 lbs.; his head an average one of 10 points. It was then only 11 o'clock, and M'Leish began to descant upon the supreme joys of fishing with a worm in the Kinglass; but as I didn't exactly hanker after that sort of thing, I proposed to go and look at the stags on his beat, even if he wouldn't let me shoot another, for he said we should then be too far away to get a second stag home that night. After some parley a compromise was come to, which pleased us both, namely, that should we find a shootable stag on the shoulder of Ben-an-luss I might be allowed a shot, the hill being close to the lodge. And this is precisely what did happen. We wandered about, seeing many good beasts during the afternoon, and at 4 o'clock found ourselves near home and discussing the merits of four stags feeding quietly below us. One was an old animal, and M'Leish, deciding that he would be better in the larder, I got an easy shot at about 70 yards, and killed. Weight 13 stone; head of 10 points; rather a poor one. And so home to dinner after a capital day's sport.

Wednesday, 4th October.—Started for the big corrie with M'Coll, and saw nothing till

we got to the Eagle Hill. On this were three stags and about twenty hinds, the property of a magnificent fellow carrying one of the best heads I have seen on Black Mount. For some time M'Coll thought he was just a bit too good to shoot, for the very best in this forest are generally left for stock purposes. Finding, however, that he was not Royal, my companion agreed to a shot—that is, if we got within shooting distance, which was not too likely, the Eagle Hill being one of those queer places where back eddies are carried down from almost any “airt” from which the wind is blowing. Luck is apparently entirely my way this week, so far at any rate. The big stag was very “kittle,” frequently roaring and keeping



THE HEAD STALKER, BLACK MOUNT, WITH PONY AND STAG

his hinds moving before him along the hill-side in the direction of another corrie running at right angles, the entrance of which, if reached, would checkmate us. A quick, stiff climb and a dashing piece of stalking on the part of M'Coll brought us in front of the herd only just in time, for I had hardly got into position when the first few hinds moved past 100 yards below us. They were very uneasy and highly suspicious, but fortunately did not stop; and in another moment, to my joy, the big stag came slowly behind them and offered a fair broadside in the very spot where I should have wished him to stand. The bullet took him through the ribs, certainly a trifle too far back, but he gave in at once and rolled 150 yards down the hill, fortunately without hurting his horns. A really fine Highland stag in his prime; weight 16 stone 2 lbs., with a good wild head of 10 points, and good cups on the top. Home at 3 o'clock, in good humour with myself and all the rest of the world.

Thursday, 5th October.—Shortly after leaving to-day we found an old stag with a lot of hinds on the east face of Ben-an-luss. He was very savage, roaring continuously and moving his hinds about, as another stag was answering him. M'Leish said he was the oldest stag in that part of the forest, and that he had known him by a certain peculiarity for no less than thirteen years. He was also a most cunning animal, for he had been stalked and shot at several times in past years. We watched him for about an hour, as his position



THE STALKERS, BLACK MOUNT

was unassailable, till at last, getting uneasy, he moved right over the top of Ben-an-luss. Now was our chance, if the mist would only hold up. Allowing a short time for the deer to settle down, we negotiated the stiff climb, and M'Leish, leaving me behind a rock on the summit, returned some distance to signal directions to the pony man. He came back just as the stag returned roaring down the pass he had ascended, and as the mist was blotting out the landscape, I feared he would come right on to us without being seen, but as luck would have it, he stopped and recommenced bellowing within 70 yards. I never heard a stag make such a row, but nothing of him could we see. It was most exciting, lying flat on a slab of rock, hoping devoutly that the mist would rise, if only for a

few seconds. The tension had grown extreme, when there was a momentary lift in the gloom, and I made out the dim forms of the deer just as a big hind, which I had not noticed, "bruached" loudly within 20 yards of us. The outline of the stag was barely visible when, after carefully aiming, I pressed the trigger, knowing that a moment later there would be no second chance. At the shot the deer at once disappeared, but I felt sure I had hit him, and on following the tracks for some 50 yards, there he lay as dead as a door-nail. Weight 13 stone 6 lbs.; a wild head of 10 points, thin and evidently that of a deer on the decline. In the evening M'Coll chaffed me for shooting what he called his old friend; but M'Leish was jubilant, as he said that M'Coll had often tried, but never managed even to stalk that particular stag.

Friday, 6th October.—The most tremendous tramp I think I ever had. We started at 8.30, and were not home till 9 at night, being practically on the move the whole day, for the weather was too cold even to sit down to lunch. Went with M'Coll all over his high ground to the top of Stob-a-na-nalaphnh (the peak of the wild boar). We looked into Corrie Hurich, where the stags were roaring like cattle in a Western corral. Many stags too were on our own ground, but hardly one of them was stationary for any length of time, the bitter wind, the snow and the hail showers keeping every beast on the move. At one time we ran nearly two miles to try and cut off a travelling stag, but without success. Arrived home pretty well done up, but thoroughly enjoyed my day on the whole, as the scenery on Glashven and the peak with the unpronounceable name were simply superb.

Saturday I spent in walking home to Forest Lodge, and as one of the home beats was vacant on the Monday, mine host kindly asked me to stop and stalk it.

Monday, 9th October.—The sort of day a stalker often dreams of, but seldom experiences. A touch of frost, a heavenly blue sky, and a glorious view everywhere. To the top of Ben Toig with Donald M'Intyre, the head stalker, a most charming companion. I saw more deer to-day than I think I ever saw before. They were literally everywhere. We made three distinct stalks without a shot, and found ourselves at 3 o'clock on the top of Ben Toig. On the way up the hill we sprang a good stag, which had been lying behind a rock; he ran about 100 yards and then stood "at gaze," and as I could neither sit nor lie down, I had to take him from the shoulder. Result, a handsome miss. This, however, did not discourage us, as we shortly spied from the summit of Ben Toig a magnificent stag lying in the midst of his harem, far away beneath our position. On a hillock facing him were some fifteen other stags scattered about, roaring occasionally, and evidently anxious to annex any of the hinds they might be able to cut out and drive off. The big stag, which could not have been much less than an 18-stone beast, gave us a lot of trouble. We made three stalks after him, but he defeated us every time; and as it was then getting late, M'Intyre begged me to take an old dark-coloured stag that was standing some 60 yards off. Just as I got into position he moved down the hill, and I fired as he was going out of sight—a broadside shot. On running forward he was nowhere to be seen, but just as I was sitting down against a rock three others, fair beasts, came into view and stood at about 200 yards' distance down hill. Thinking stag No. 1 was missed, M'Intyre told me to fire at the last of the three, and I did so. Much to my delight, he staggered forward and rolled over dead. My companion, who had left me, now commenced searching amongst

the rocks in front of us, and presently beckoned me to him, and on coming up I found him standing over the dead body of the first stag at which I had fired. No. 1—weight 13 stone, fair head; No. 2—weight 12 stone, poor head. And so ended a most enjoyable week.

Things are not, however, too often *couleur de rose* with the deer-stalker. Much more frequently the elements are against him, and he has to console himself as well as he can with the memory of brighter days. A week like the following is much more common.

I had been stalking for a fortnight in two Northern forests with fair success. The weather had been all that could be desired, but good stags were scarce. Naturally on going to Black Mount I looked forward to a first-rate week, as I was to stalk on the home beats, which are by far the best; but the day I arrived at Forest Lodge the weather broke, and we had a thorough dose of West Coast rain.

13th September 1892.—A long day with Grant on Benzie. Lots of stags, but wind most unfavourable. We kept moving deer nearly all day. In the afternoon I got a difficult chance at a frightened stag, having to aim at his neck for fear of haunching him. The distance was a bit too great, and I missed. Saw a very fine stag late in the evening, but twilight coming on, we had to leave him.

14th September.—To Loch Baa flats with Buchanan. Wind and rain alike bad for stalking. About 5 P.M. found a splendid lot of stags, amongst them two carrying good heads, one a Royal; but, to our annoyance, they kept moving away from us, and then, just as we were getting within shot, a perfect deluge of rain came down, and I had a cruel piece of bad luck. A big stag was standing clear at about 150 yards, with a small one alongside of him. I was obliged to shoot quickly, as they had seen us, and at the very moment that I pressed the trigger the little stag—a beast of 10 stone—started forward, covered the larger animal, and received my bullet. So quickly did it happen that I had no time to stop the pressure on the trigger, and we trudged home in a very different frame of mind from that in which we started.

15th September.—Another day with Grant on Benzie. No luck, no shot, but continuous rain and mist.

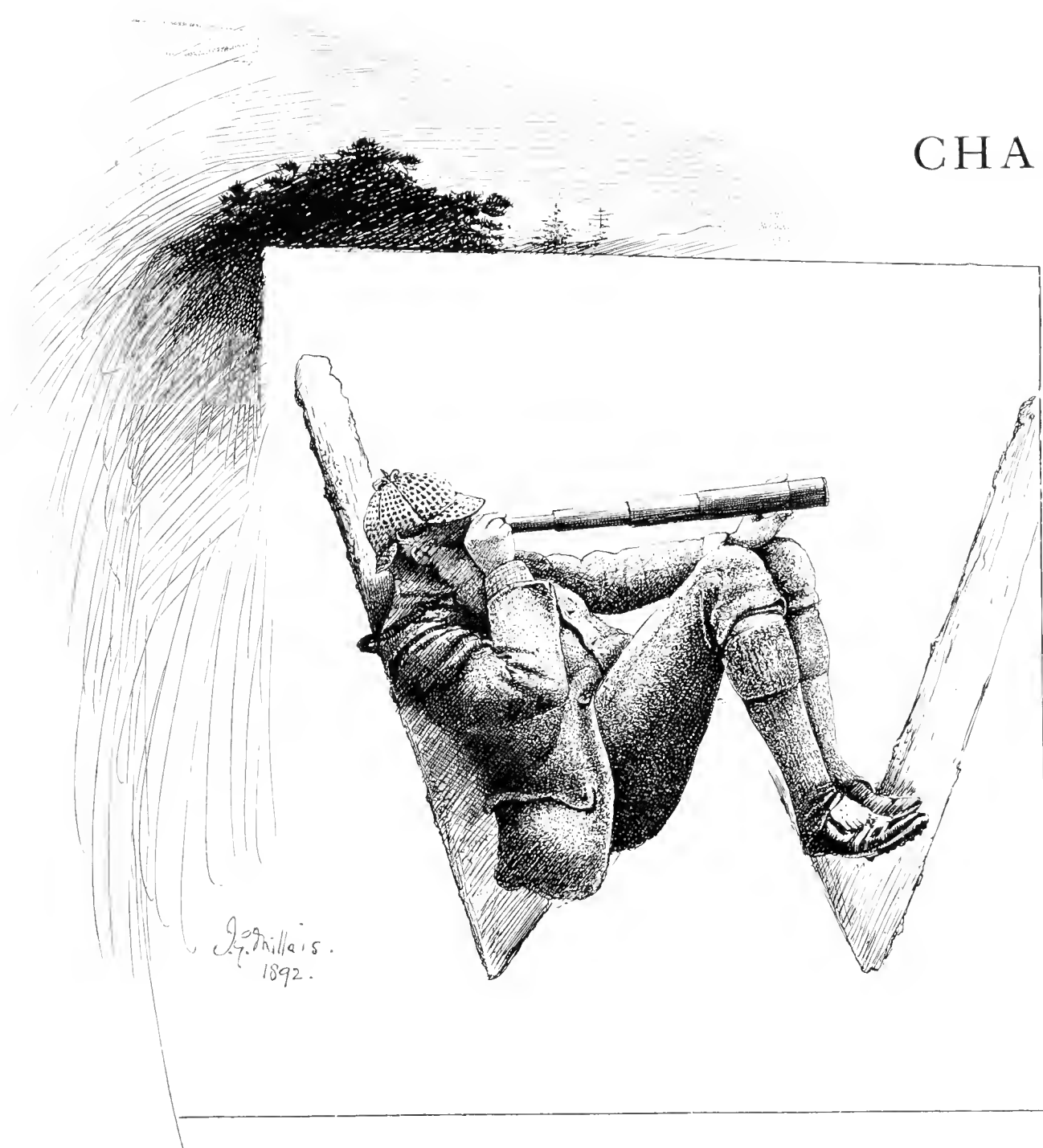
16th September.—Pouring cats and dogs! Stalked on paper, and did a few sketches in the morning. In the evening went out with Maxton Graham and shot a few grouse.

17th September.—Another beast of a day! Backwards and forwards on Loch Baa flats, without a particle of success.

The next day was Saturday, and being my last, the fickle goddess was unusually kind, and being a day of exceptional interest, perhaps the gentle reader will follow it through the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

A DAY IN LARIG DOCHART



WELL, you've got a fine day at last, sir ; you'll have good luck to-day," said William as he drew up the blinds and let the welcome sunlight permeate my little room, touching with gold the white points of the heads of fallen monarchs that adorned the walls. The first part of this cheerful remark was so obviously true that I sprang out of bed at once, and hurried over my toilet with an energy I had not experienced for some time past ; but as to the good luck, that seemed almost incredible after the experiences of the past week. Every morning I had watched eagerly for a clear view of the mountains with the green and purple tops, only to find

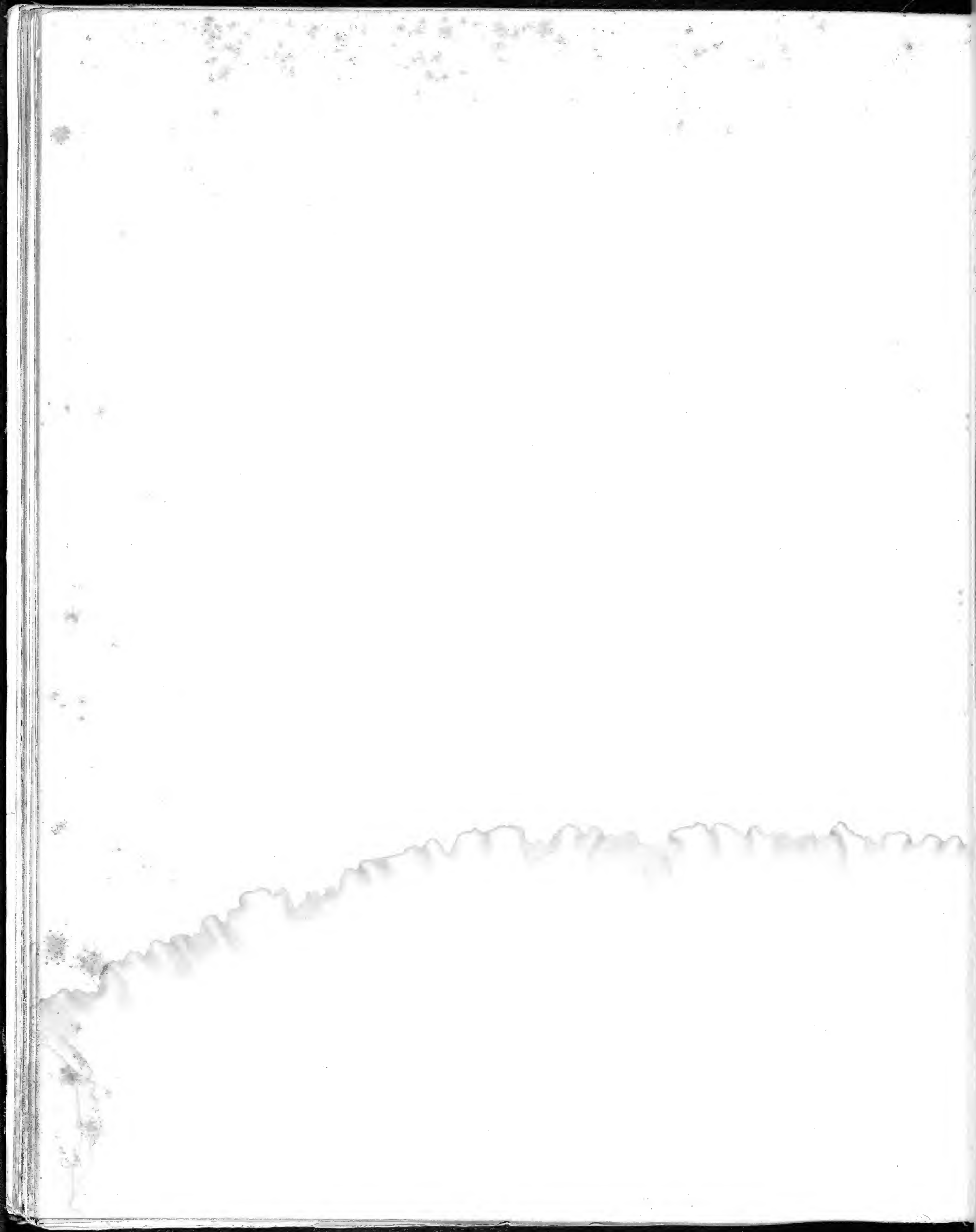
them hidden away under a cloak of mist or drenching showers, that lasted, with rare intervals, throughout the day.

Under such circumstances good sport is not to be expected, and (except Mr. Monty Campbell, who had been pretty successful in the outside lodge of Altahourn, situated far up in the forest) none of us had done very much. Chance shots may, however, be obtained when the animals are moving from one position to another ; or perhaps a solitary old hart may be found hiding in some retired corrie to which he has attached himself during the summer, and which he is loth to leave before the rutting season commences. So at every possible opportunity out we went, Mr. Maxton Graham (my companion in the Forest Lodge) and myself, with the result that, except one day when we each got one beast, we returned drenched to the skin, but with no carcasses but our own to show. Now, however, on this last day of our visit we were greeted with such a vision as Scotland alone can present. Ben Toig smiled upon us from afar, his robe of purple gay with golden splashes of sunlight, that chased each other over the whole expanse ; and through the open window



Swan Electric Engraving Co.

Cornie Howrich - Black Mount.



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came to us as we sat at breakfast the sweet incense of the pine woods with which the morning air was laden. I had, too, the promise of our host that on the first fine day I should be taken to the high beat of Larig Dochart, whose transcendent beauty I had heard discussed a hundred times in the smoking-room; so with this brilliant prospect before me, I need hardly say I did not linger over breakfast.

A start for the hill is soon made, the arrangements here being perfect, and the guest having no further trouble than to call for his stalker and pony whenever he likes. For over a mile the road passes along a beautiful avenue of pines and larches, through which



"SOME GROUSE AND BLACKGAME CAME OVER, AND ALL THEIR HEADS WENT UP AT ONCE"
 Photograph of wild deer from nature taken in the forest of the Black Mount.

the lovely Loch Tulla is plainly seen, while on the other side is the home wood, where, amongst the trees and dense undergrowth, a roe, or now and then a stag, fearlessly shows himself as he takes a peep at the passing traveller, this being part of the sanctuary whose inmates, consisting of stags, roe, and semi-wild white-faced hinds presented to Lord Breadalbane by the King of Denmark, are never disturbed.

On debouching from the avenue gate, leaving on the right the head stalker's house, resonant with the howling of dogs, and bristling with the antlers of many a noble hart that has breathed his last in the forest of the Black Mount, we follow the road across the open moor and along the course of the river for four miles to Grant's house, where we dismount and commence the ascent at once.

Till now the day had been all that could be desired, but before we were half-way up

the mountain, black clouds, which had been gathering ominously in the west, burst upon us in a perfect deluge of rain, and with the depressing experiences of previous days fresh in mind, we should have sunk in despair but for the assurance of Grant that it was probably a passing shower, which would be over by the time we reached the summit. So on we went, soaked to the skin, but cheered in spirit by a discourse on Highland pipe music, in the history of which, as well as the practice, Grant is equally at home. Grant, let me say, is one of the *élites* of his craft, a man of cultivated mind and refined feelings—in a word, one of “Nature’s gentlemen,” of whom, happily, there are many specimens to be found in the stalking fraternity,—and with the advantage of 6 feet 3 inches in height, and a frame in proportion, he is in every way fitted for the work he loves to pursue. A jovial man



“AS A FEATHER IS WIFTED DOWNWARD FROM AN EAGLE IN HER FLIGHT”

too is Grant, with a sense of humour altogether at variance with Sydney Smith’s playful remark that “it requires a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman’s head”; so a more pleasant companion on a hill-side could hardly be found.

He was right about the weather. No sooner had we reached the summit than the rain ceased, and beneath our feet lay open to view what might well be called a Sportsman’s Paradise. Standing on the deer-pass above the two corries of Larig Dochart and Althourn, we had a magnificent view of the latter—the largest and probably the best corrie in the forest of the Black Mount,—and as we saw it, with the sun stealing across the immense slopes upwards over line after line of ridges, whose serrated forms were finally lost to sight in the mists of Glencoe, it presented as fine a subject for a picture as I have ever seen.

Landseer seems to have thought so too, for upon a memorable occasion he turned away the wrath of his fellow-sportsmen by committing it to canvas. There was a big drive going

on, and Landseer was posted on the spot we now occupied, to await the coming of the deer ; and instead of allowing the first lot to go by, he fired at a stag that was coming up the pass towards him, the result of which was that the deer, numbering about a thousand, clubbed together and broke back, to the utter ruin of the drive. The great painter was so impressed with the spectacle that he left his post and ran home to paint it while it was still fresh in his mind, and when his comrades returned to the lodge in the evening they found the chief event of the day so charmingly and truthfully depicted that they readily forgave the disappointment he had caused them.

Mid-day was now approaching, and as my glass presently assured me that the little brown specks on the Altahourn slopes were stags with some good harts amongst them, the fascination of the scene suddenly gave place to a conflicting emotion like that which got King Ahab into trouble with regard to Naboth's vineyard. I wanted to be after them at once, but Grant objected. We had better try Larig Dochart, he said, since no shot had been fired there for a fortnight and the ground had been perfectly undisturbed. So, after advancing cautiously for some 400 yards along the razor-backed ridge which separates the two corries, I sat down to lunch, while Grant crawled forward to a rock which commanded an extensive view of our ground, and proceeded to carefully examine it. He "found" at once, and I knew instinctively by the stationary position of his glass on some object below us, followed by short impulsive movements to right and left, that he had got not only one beast but several. All was now impatience on my part, and, hurriedly finishing my meal, I waited till Grant had slowly pushed himself into a sitting posture, when he proceeded to wipe the face of his glass with a red bandana of prodigious dimensions, while his own face assumed an

expression of extreme seriousness. Now it was my turn to have a look, and—Yes! by all that was delightful, there they were, nearly a hundred deer grazing along the face of the hill about 300 yards below us. My glass, however, had another tale to tell. Running it quickly over the entire herd, they seemed to be composed, almost without exception, of hinds, "knobbers," and brockets—not a shootable stag amongst them,—and now my only hope was to discover some fine "beastie" that I might have overlooked, or which might be lying half-hidden behind some sheltering hummock. With spirits sobered by disappointment, I was looking for this, when a voice close to my ear laconically observed, "That's no the right beasties you've got, sir. The others are over the brow to the right." It was the voice of Grant, whose digit finger told me where to look for what I wanted ; and, taking down my glass, I saw with a thrill of exultation about seventy stags, the finest lot I had ever beheld, dotted about on the hill-side some 700 yards farther towards the head of the corrie. Rarely indeed, except in such a forest as this, could such a sight be seen. There was hardly an unshootable stag amongst the whole herd, and many a one that had long since reached his prime. Most of them were lying chewing the cud in happy ignorance of danger, and I had



WHAT WE ARE ALL LOOKING FOR

hardly begun to scrutinise their respective merits when four of them lying on the flank nearest to us rose and commenced feeding in our direction. Grant now urged immediate action, fearing that any movement would carry them out of shot ; but while he was talking I saw through my glass the antlers of one particular stag that I felt at once must be mine if life was any longer to be worth a thought. He was lying in the middle of the herd with head and neck only visible above the long grass, and occasionally shaking his head or flicking impatiently at his flanks when the midges became troublesome. And how nobly he carried that head of his ! how dignified his attitude even when at rest ! Here was Royalty, if you please, a Royalty impossible to overlook even amongst all the fine heads presented by other members of the herd. Grant was as enthusiastic as myself, and thought a stalk was



HIDDEN AWAY BEHIND SOME PEAT HAG, HE PASSES MOST OF THE DAY

quite possible, for a line of broken ground ran round the ridge on the summit of the corrie down to within eighty yards of the herd. Our first manœuvre then was to advance cautiously along the Altahourn side of the crest to a point immediately above the stags, whence we could readily descend ; but on arriving there an unforeseen obstacle presented itself in the shape of a group of scattered hinds, which had been feeding in a small gully unseen from our starting-place. If we took the downward course, these, we saw, would have a full view of our movements for the first hundred yards or so, and although the wind was in our favour, still we could hardly hope to avoid a disturbance which might put an end at once to our day's sport. However, our minds had to be made up at once, for every moment might take the stags farther away from the spot where we had hoped to get our shot. Using, therefore, the utmost caution, and taking advantage of every big stone, grassy knoll, etc., we slid down the hill, watching at the same time the movement of every hind, and whenever one of them raised her head and gazed about her, we lay perfectly still, wishing in our hearts she had never seen the light of this world. The first fifty yards afforded us here and there a little cover in the shape of loose stones ; then we suddenly plumped into a big spring which formed

a line for itself down the hill-side, ending in a marshy burn, where little or no protection could be obtained. It was one of the most exciting and most pleasurable stalks I ever enjoyed, for within 150 yards of us were half a dozen hinds, in full view nearly all the time, and every nerve was braced up in the effort to avoid alarming them. At last, after half an hour of doubts, hopes, and fears, we gained the coveted standpoint, but only to gaze on the hind-quarters of the last stag as he fed rapidly away out of shot, with the herd spread out like a fan in front of him. It was a bitter disappointment, but there was hardly time to utter a naughty word before another scene presented itself. Glancing backward, Grant noticed that



FEEDING NERVOUSLY AFTER BEING MOVED

the hinds were advancing every minute nearer to our line of retreat, and unless we hurried up at once, they would get wind of us and all would be over. So off we started for the top of the hill again, taking every step with redoubled caution, as some of the hinds had already moved to within sixty yards of our only covering, and seemed to be more unsettled in their movements. Happily for us, their attention was mainly directed to the retreating line of the stags; so, though our pace up the hill was twice as fast as that of our descent, we succeeded in regaining the summit without a single hitch.

It was now a case of "check," but not "checkmate," thanks to Grant's intimate knowledge of the ground and his quick manœuvres. Our chance of a shot was but a poor one, but there was just the hope that some of the stags might return to their former position before the light failed; and for even a difficult shot at the noble hart I had seen, I was mad

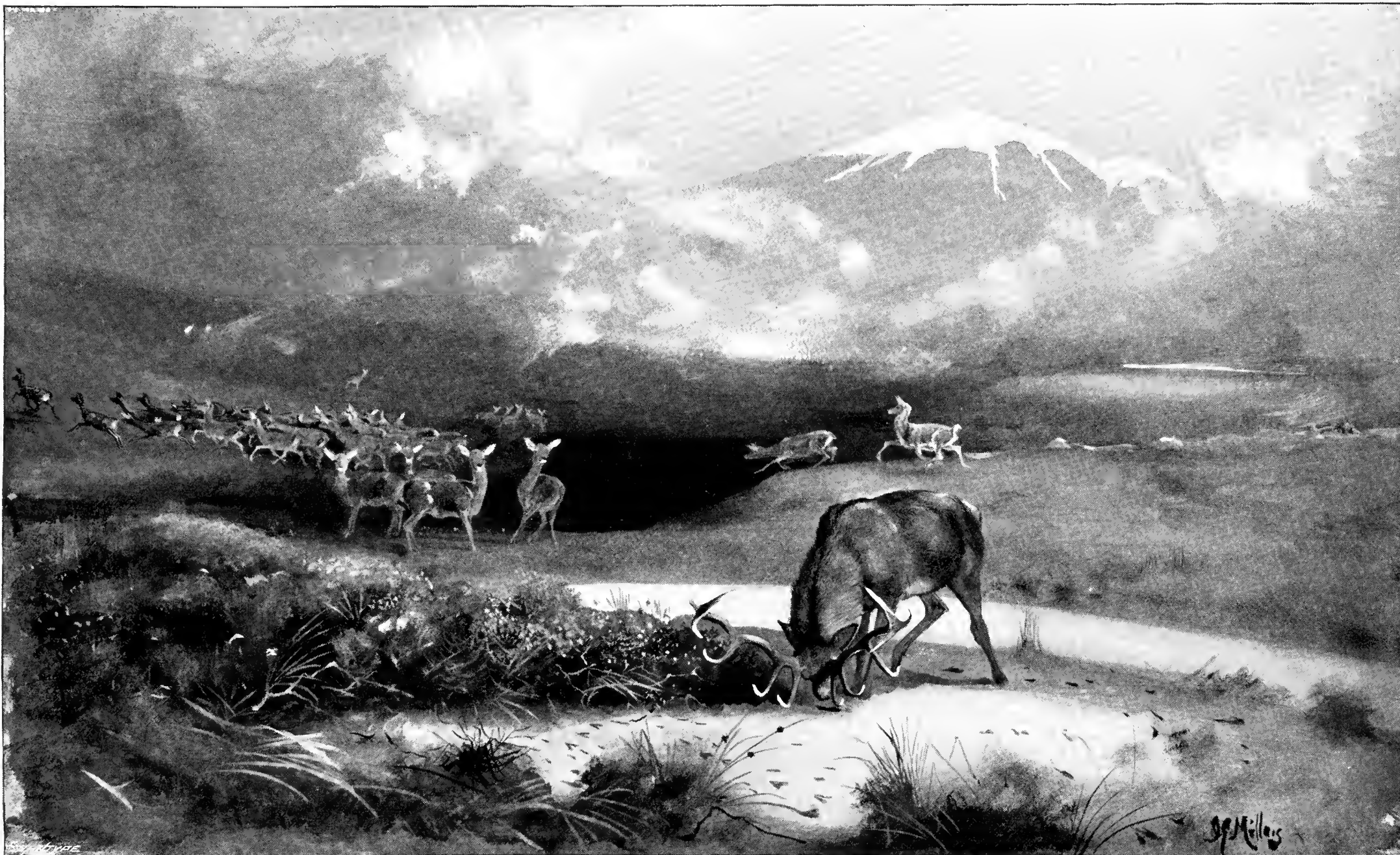
enough to feel that I could wait for a week if necessary. Retracing, therefore, our steps along the ridge, we moved downward to a position some distance below the sky-line, and considerably above the spot where the stags were now peacefully browsing. Some big boulders projecting over the corrie afforded us both shelter and a coign of vantage from which we could observe every movement on the part of the deer; so there we rested for a while to enjoy the scene. And now the leading stag, a splendid old fellow over 16 stone, dropped on his knees and lay down, and his example being followed by the whole herd, nothing could be seen over the long grass where they were but a series of brown necks surmounted by a small forest of horns. Now when a stag lies down, it may be from one hour to three before he moves again; so after waiting for more than two hours we came to the conclusion that these, at any rate, intended to take their maximum of repose; and during this long, and somewhat chilly wait, we overhauled the merits of the herd. There were certainly six good 10-pointers amongst them, and at least one Royal, but the stag that had engrossed our attention from the first had by far the best head amongst them, though in point of size he looked rather small in comparison with some of his comrades. The more I looked at him, the more I longed to call him mine. I told Grant, quite seriously, I would give half-a-year's pay to get a good chance at this particular stag, upon which he opened his eyes in amazement at such wild extravagance, his idea being, no doubt, that a subaltern in Her Majesty's service must needs be right handsomely remunerated for his services.

All this time the sun was sinking lower and lower, and the air every moment turning more chilly. Still the stags showed not the slightest disposition to move, and I now saw that Grant was wrong in thinking, as he did at first, that they would return to their former position, and that unless he tried at once what he had previously hinted at as a "desperate" alternative, all chance of a shot would be gone. He then proceeded to unfold his plan, as follows. Three passes well known to him were used by the deer in journeying to and fro between Larig Dochart and Altahourn, and by one of these they would certainly retreat if disturbed by the appearance of a man at the foot of the corrie. The main pass, faintly discernible as it wound in and out of the rocks at our feet, ran in our direction, and the game, if skilfully "moved," would probably endeavour to escape that way. If not, we might still intercept them by hard running, in either of the other passes, which ran respectively to right and left of us about 500 yards away.

A few words in Gaelic to Donald, the gillie, and away he went by a circuitous route to the foot of the corrie, there to show himself for a moment and instantly disappear from view. This, as all stalkers know, has a most terrifying effect on deer. If an intruder stands and looks at them from a distance, or walks quietly by, they will stop and gaze at him, with probably more interest than alarm; but an object that vanishes the moment they look at it suggests such terrible things that off they go in a panic for—"anywhere, anywhere, out of the world."

Half an hour elapsed, during which a sharp shower of sleet paid us a visit, and then the rising of a covey of ptarmigan from the burn-side below told us that the gillie was pretty near to his work. A moment later every stag was on his feet gazing anxiously down-hill at the spot where he had appeared, and all sense of the discomfort we had undergone was lost in eager speculation as to the line they would take. Grant seized the rifle, and I my stick

and glass, prepared to do a record flank march at a moment's notice ; but we soon perceived that our running powers would not be called upon, for after a general move about in all directions one or two of the animals nearest to us turned their steps towards the main pass, and presently the foremost of them began to mount the hill. He was a small beast, but very fat, judging by the puffs and grunts he emitted while "peching" heavily in his laboured ascent, and we could hardly help laughing at the caricature he presented of an old gentleman hampered with a "bow window" under similar circumstances. Suddenly, however, to our dismay, he turned into a pathway unknown to Grant, and when within

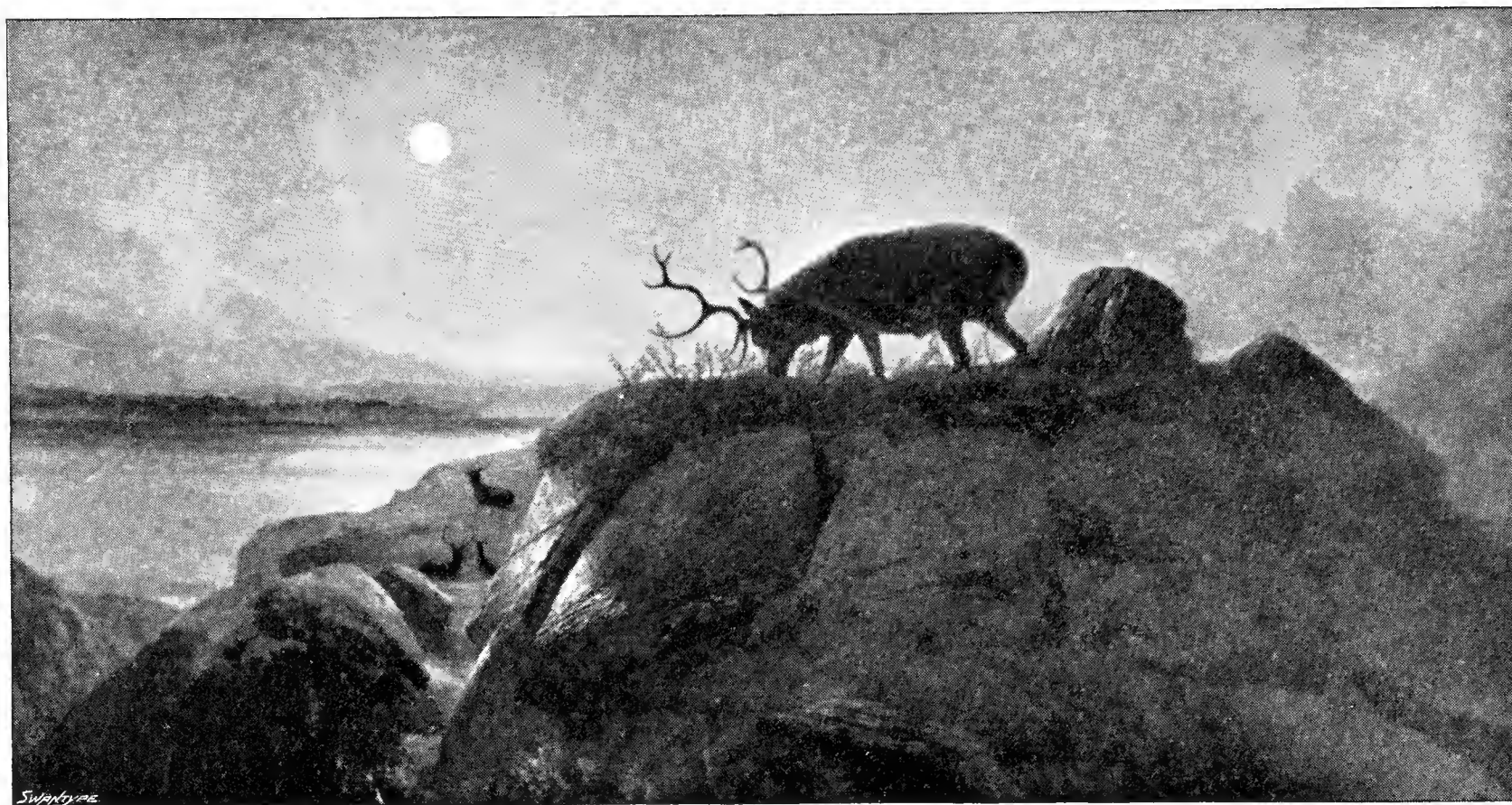


"HE'S A' RIGHT"

thirty yards of our hiding-place he paused for a stare at us that seemed well-nigh interminable as we lay glued to the rock and trying to look part of itself, while inwardly dreading a right-about-face that would carry the whole herd down the hill again. Happily, however, the wind was in our favour, and after satisfying himself that we were not worth another thought, he moved slowly away along his original line, every now and then looking back to assure himself that his conclusion was right. He was no sooner out of sight than Grant nudged my elbow excitedly and whipped the rifle out of its cover, whispering as he did so that there was a grand stag coming straight for us, and I must be prepared to shoot at once. No sooner said than done. Instantly a vision of antlers and a broad back appeared not 50 yards below us. My heart gave a bound when I saw what a fine beast he was, as he ascended the steep with the agility of a cat, in striking contrast to his plethoric predecessor on that route. With his head thrown well up (as, by the way, every big stag moves), so

that his horns almost rested on his back, I saw at once that, if not the big stag we had been so anxiously watching, he was at any rate quite as good.

And now for the shot ! In place of my own rifle, the striker of which had gone wrong on the previous day, my host had kindly lent me a 450 Reilly, which, though otherwise perfect, shot very high at a close range, as he was careful to point out. So when this monarch of the glen stood and boldly faced me within 30 yards, I took a very fine sight below his heart. What, then, was my amazement on seeing him swing round and dash at full speed down the hill again as the only response to my shot ! It seemed to me impossible to have missed him standing as he was, even supposing the bullet had gone point blank without any rise in the trajectory. Still there he was, bolting down the rocks apparently unscathed, and at the moment there was no chance of getting in the other barrel, as at the



THE LAST CHANCE BEFORE NIGHT

foot of the rocks immediately beneath us he was met by two other big stags, upon which he turned away along the hill-side, with them so close at his heels that it was impossible to shoot without the risk of "haunching" him. For some 50 yards the three animals sailed along at a steady gallop, when suddenly number two made a savage thrust with his horns at the leading stag, throwing him upon his haunches right off the path. Grant was now sure our stag was badly hit ; yet after recovering his legs he still moved on at a good pace, following in the steps of the other two, who had by this time shot past him. At last a sharp turn in the path brought him to a slow trot, and from that to a quick shuffling walk, which was apparently distressful. As he was still only about 100 yards off, and presented a good broadside, I let him have the left barrel as he was on the point of turning away again, and once more he started off at a hard gallop. But it was the poor beast's last effort. After going some 30 yards his legs suddenly gave way under him, and he rolled over and over like a rabbit shot bolting from a hill-side. As he bumped along from one plateau to another Grant was loud in his lamentations. "Hoots, toots," he cried, "when will she stop ? when will she stop ? She'll be jelly whatever" ; and as the corrie was six or seven hundred feet

deep, I felt sure that the carcass would be smashed to pieces if it reached the bottom. But fortune favoured us this time. The line of the fall was happily an unbroken series of grassy slopes terminating in big boulders. Only one rock had been struck, and in a few minutes Grant and I were at the side of the dead stag, filled with delight in his beauty and at the wonderful good luck that had enabled us to enjoy it.

"Now, Mr. Millais, how about that six months' pay?" remarked the stalker, with a sly twinkle in his eye. Yes, there was no doubt about it, this was the identical stag that all day long I had been so anxious to shoot, and now I could hardly contain myself for joy at the realisation of my hope. He was not by any means a heavy stag, scaling only 15 stone clean, but his beautifully compact frame, leonine neck, and branching antlers came fully up to my anticipations on first viewing him through the glass. The tops of the horns, which lacked one point to make him Royal, were very fine, as were also the tray points, but there was a perceptible falling off in the strength of the brows and bays, showing that he was evidently an old beast on the decline. Whether or not the lost point was broken off in the fall down-hill we could not say, but the loss was evidently a recent one. The first bullet, we found, had struck below and behind the heart, narrowly escaping a clean miss, while the second, penetrating the ribs, had brought matters to a conclusion.



WAITING FOR DONALD



THE LARGEST STAG'S HEAD IN THE WORLD

Measurements

Span at widest, $75\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length right horn, $47\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length left horn, $47\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Circumference of coronet, 14 in.

Beam above first point, $9\frac{1}{2}$ (R) and $10\frac{1}{4}$ (L).
Beam above tray time, $8\frac{1}{4}$ (R) and 9 (L).
Length of brow points, $20\frac{1}{4}$ (R) and $20\frac{1}{2}$ (L).
Points, 24. Weight of horns, 41 lbs.

CHAPTER VI

STAGS' HEADS

LAST year (1896) an animated discussion took place in the *Field* on the subject of deers' heads and how such trophies should be judged and measured. The sole result of that discussion was to prove how entirely confident the Britisher is in his own opinion and how little he likes to have one formed for him. It is all very well to talk about the excellence of the Continental methods of measuring stags' heads to three places of decimals, and having annual exhibitions of the trophies, but in our little islands, alas! poor *Cervus elaphus* is not what he is across the water. Here we value most, as a rule, the head of the animal that has given us the best sport, and our very best trophies in size or quality are not sufficiently good to attract the fearfully serious attention which is given to the great German and Hungarian head.

Though the Continental modes of measurement are undoubtedly the best, they are quite inapplicable to our little trophies, and after giving the subject the greatest possible attention I cannot see that there is a better way than that adopted by Mr. Rowland Ward in his *Records of Big Game*. It is both simple and practicable. In this country, however,

I find that all sportsmen when measuring the length of a head include the coronet, the tape being taken from the bottom edge of the coronet up into the dip of the horn and following the outside curve in the usual way, and Mr. Ward does the same.

If a sportsman sends the measurements of a stag's head, stating length of horn outside curve, span inside and over all, beam above brow point, tip to tip, number of points, and a few words on any special feature of the head, I think one can make a fair guess as to its quality, for the beam of a stag's head is generally maintained upward with only a slight falling away between the tray and the cup.

Every man dislikes being educated, especially on a subject on which he has already formed his own opinion, so I shall not try to do any such thing, but only offer to my readers what I consider the very best examples in this country of British deer heads grown under all conditions of life. The remarks upon them are simply my own views of their respective merits, so that the reader may accept or discard them as he thinks fit. The one point which I would, however, emphasise is that I have conscientiously endeavoured to do my work without partiality, favour, or affection, and that he here will, for the first time, see a large collection of the best British heads all measured to one standard, and for the most part by one man.

As in the judging of pictures, no two opinions are, after all, alike, and there the matter will rest, in spite of columns of print ; but that there is such a thing as *the best head* of every species is undeniable.

Many of my readers will recollect the splendid show of hunting trophies at the American Exhibition in 1887. There it was unanimously agreed by experts and the judges that Mr. Tulloch's 20-point wapiti head was the finest of its kind in the room, and, we might well add, anywhere else in the world. What were the qualities of this peerless head ? 1, Perfect symmetry ; 2, great beam or thickness ; 3, a large number of points (for a wapiti), all perfectly balanced, as sharp as needles ; and last, but not least, the horns were of that beautiful hard beaded and rough quality without which a head seldom reaches any degree of perfection. Now that wapiti head is simply ideal, just as we now make Sir Edwin Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen" our ideal of a Highland head.

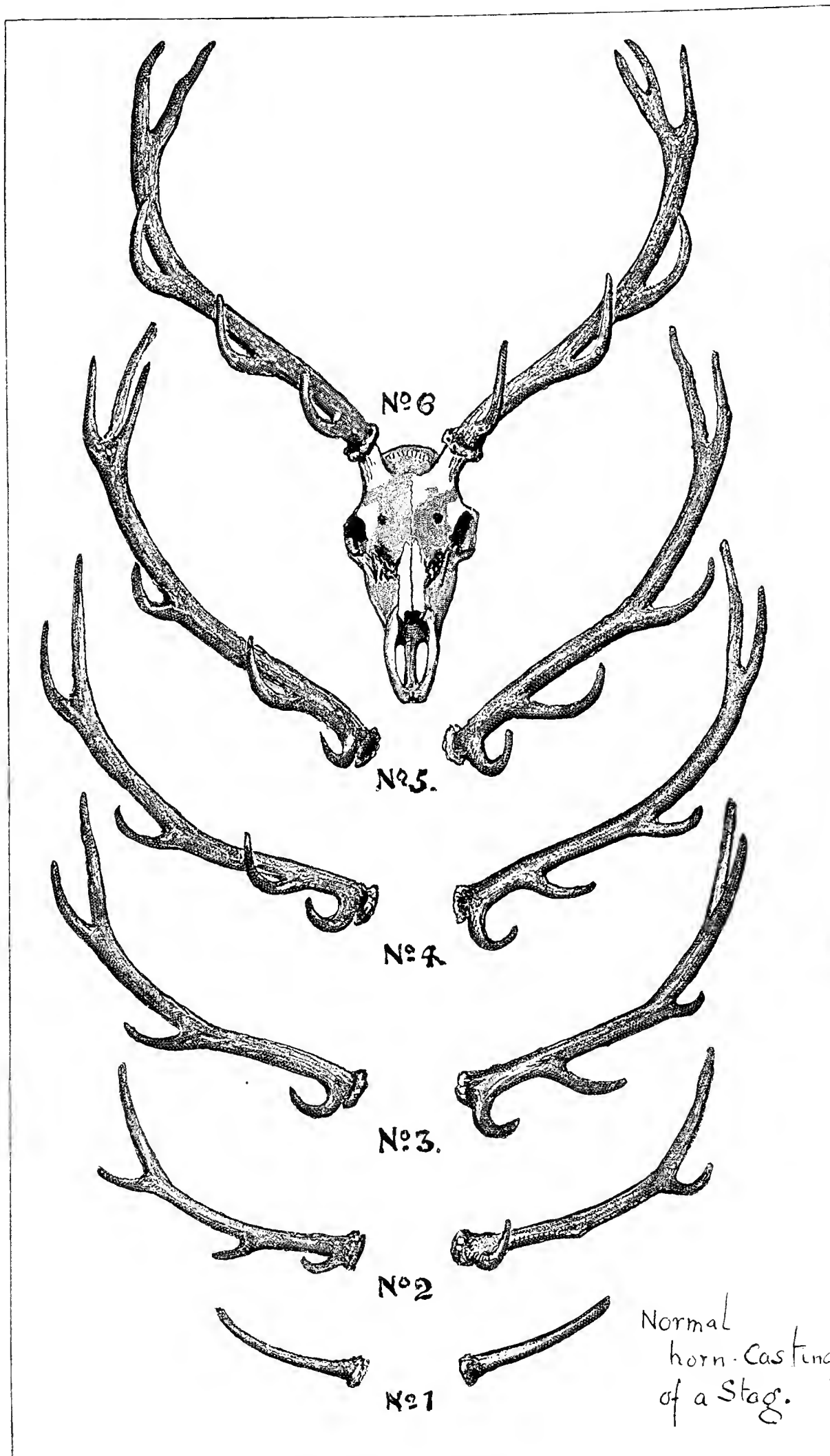
I think heads should be judged in the above order of qualifications, the first point, that of beauty of form, being by far the most important, for a great big head seems to lose more than half its claims to excellence unless it is set in the natural and artistic lines of beauty which appeal directly to the eye.

Now let us look at horns and what they are. Tom Hood, with his usual fun, says, "Look at the stag with his stately antlers ; he can produce a perfect flourish of horns, like some clever musician, thoroughly original, and all out of his own head."

To be more prosaic, horns are described as "appendages" which grow from the surface of the head of certain mammals of the order *Ungulata*, and are used as weapons of offence and defence, and are mainly protective in their origin. It is one of the instances of the exception to Darwin's theory of sexual selection which would seem to prove the rule. The great scientist, as Mr. Allan Gordon Cameron has pointed out, assumes, against the evidence, that superiority in the lethal weapon secures mastership of the harem in the test of battle between rival males, and he also assumes that absence of the lethal weapon is fatal to success in war. The real

fact is that whenever observation supplies us with a crucial test (as with the tuskless elephant or the hornless stag), these weaponless individuals are almost invariably masters of the herd.

Those of us who have had the advantage of observing deer frequently in the rutting



From an animal kept in a Yorkshire Park ; horns now in Natural History Museum, S. Kensington. Animal was born in 1880, and in year of its birth had no antlers. No. 1, grown 1881, shed spring 1882. No. 2, grown 1882, shed April 1883. No. 3, grown 1883, shed spring 1884. No. 4, grown 1884, shed 1885. No. 5, grown 1885, shed 1886. No. 6, grown 1886, during which year the animal was shot.¹

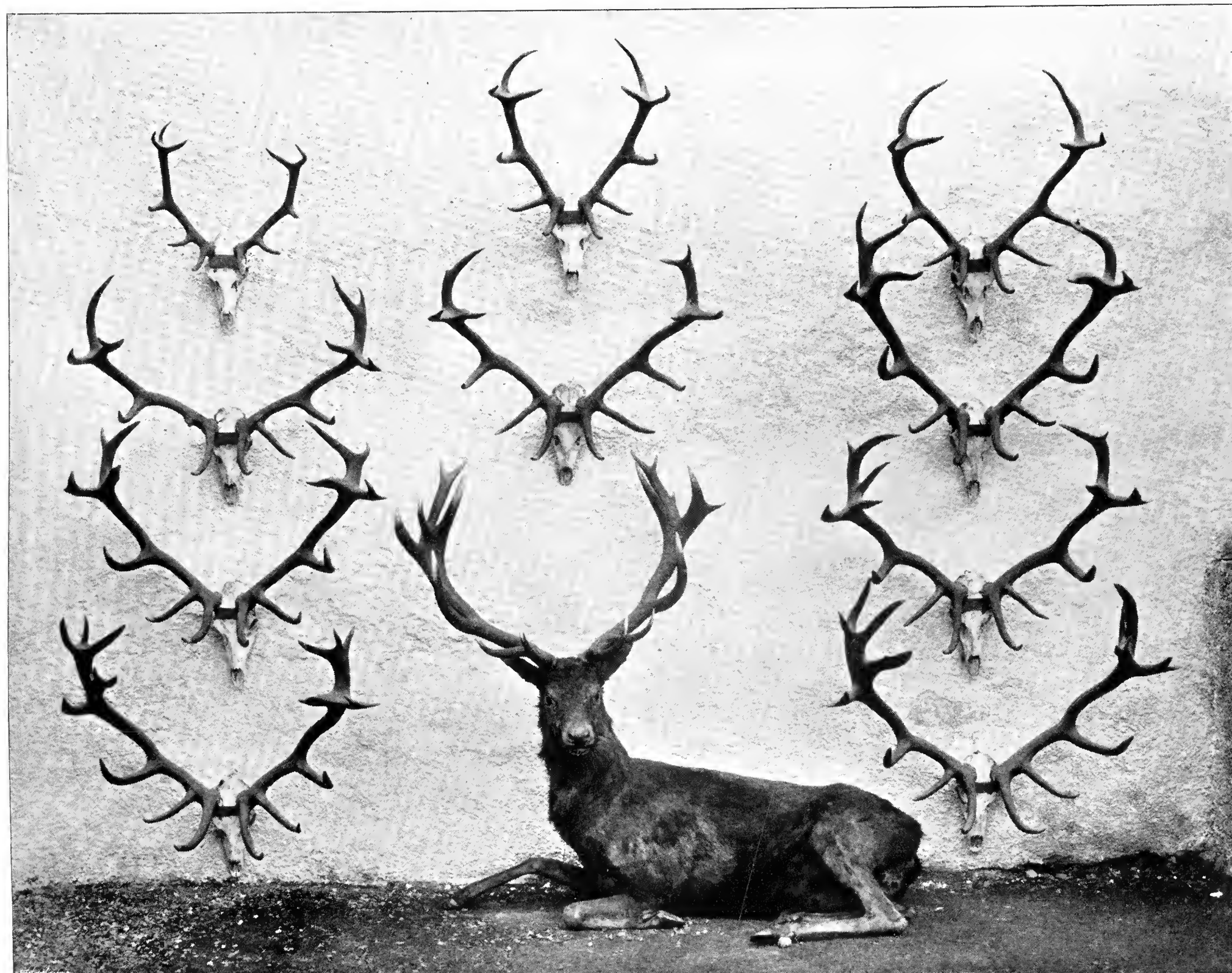
season will have noticed how an active heavy-bodied stag will almost invariably obtain the mastery of a herd, often beating the better-antlered ones. Mr. Baillie Grohman, in his excellent *Sport in the Alps*, however, makes a very questionable suggestion, which, if he had had a wider experience of Scotch forests, he would not have made. He says that good-

¹ By kind permission of Sir William Flower.

headed stags should not be killed till after or during the rutting season, as they would then have done their duty—a statement which is very doubtful.

An interesting parallel is pointed out by Sir William Flower between the development of the race and that of the individual :—

The earliest known forms of deer (he says), those of the lower Miocene, had *no antlers*, as in the young of existing species. The deer of the middle Miocene had simple antlers with not more than *two branches*, as in many existing deer of the second year. Species occur in the upper Miocene with *three*



SERIES OF HORNS GROWN BY "TILT" (SEMI-FERAL)

A stag taken as a calf from Glen Tilt and kept in confinement in Blair Castle Park. The dropped horns are mounted on skulls, and must be counted from left to right. They commence with eleven points as a four-year-old grown in 1840, and end with the stuffed body of the deer, which was shot in 1850.

branches to the antlers, but it was not until the upper Pliocene and Pleistocene times that deer were met with having antlers developed with that luxuriance of growth and beauty of form characteristic of some of the existing species in a perfectly adult state.

Horns are composed of three tissues : 1, bone ; 2, true skin ; 3, epidermis, which, when developed in a great mass, forms the hard substance commonly spoken of as horn. The upgrowth is thus simply described by Sir William Flower :—

In the family *Cervidae*, or deer, the frontal appendages take the form of "antlers," which must be

carefully distinguished from the "horns" of the bovine ruminants. These are outgrowths of true bone, covered during their growth with vascular, sensitive integument coated with short hair, technically called "the velvet." When the growth of the antler is complete, the supply of blood to it ceases, the skin dies and peels off, leaving the bone bare and insensible, in which state it is well adapted for a fighting weapon. After a time, by a process of absorption near the base, it becomes loosened from the skull and is shed. A more or less elongated portion, called the "pedicle," always remains on the skull, from the summit of which a new antler is developed. In most existing deer this process is repeated with great regularity at the same period of the year. Even the great horns of the wapiti, and, judging by all analogy, those of the Irish elk (*Megaceros*), the pair of which weigh 70 lbs., more than all the bones of the skeleton put together, are produced in the course of three or four months.

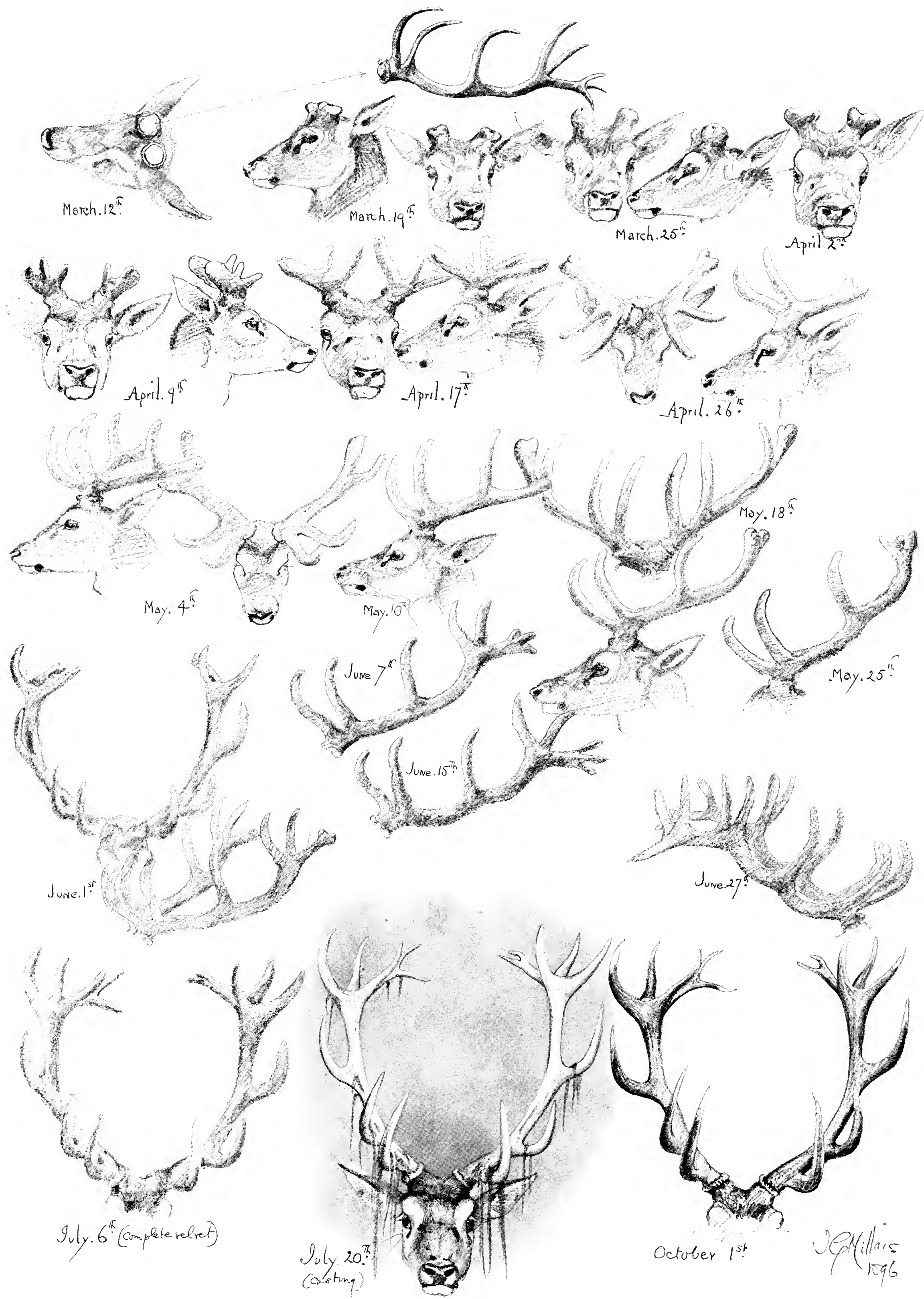
According to all works on Natural History which I have read, the commencement of growth of a stag's new horns does not take place until the old ones are cast. Now I noticed a very curious thing this spring, namely that the *new skin* and the *epidermis* beneath it *do commence to grow* for some days before the old horns are shed.¹ I had been carefully watching a park stag in March a few days *before* he cast his horns, and noticed a visible swelling below the coronet which was slightly larger than the coronet itself. When the horns were cast, on 15th March, this swollen mass of epidermis and skin was therefore ready to overlap at once the bare top of the "pedicle," and as soon as the flaps on the summit joined, *the bone* commenced to grow from the summit of the pedicle. A few days later than this I went over to Leonardslee, where Sir Edmund Loder was trying the effects of some Mannlicher bullets. He allowed me to shoot a Japanese stag, and the first thing I noticed was the distended state of the skin round the "pedicle" where the new epidermis was actually growing, for the animal's horns were just about to be shed.

I made it my business this year to draw a series of sketches showing the exact growth of a stag's horns during the summer. They describe the gradual formation and completion of the horn better than any verbal explanation, and are all taken from the same animal (see opposite page).

Having seen how an adult stag grows his horns, another picture illustrates those grown during six successive years (p. 90). Of course, in the year of its birth (1880) the deer had no antlers, and the dates of growth and shedding are stated beneath the plate. Quite the best series of antlers I have seen, kept and marked from year to year and showing the successive development, are those of four pet stags, which were kept in Blair Castle Park, and which now adorn the walls of the passages at Blair. The Duke of Athole has kindly allowed me to have a photograph taken of the splendid series of antlers grown and shed (during ten successive years) by "Tilt," one of the four, and under the picture a full description is given. It is interesting to notice that, the stag having lived under semi-feral conditions with a good range, few other deer, good winter feeding and shelter, the head shows only a little deterioration at the age of fourteen, though the tops are, as is usual for a stag of his age, much heavier, whilst the brows are becoming smaller (see p. 91).

The time of year when a deer sheds his antlers depends upon his age. In a park the oldest stags shed first, and are followed at intervals of about a fortnight by those who come next in age; so that, after a mild winter, a nine-year-old stag will sometimes shed as early as

¹ See March 12th figure on opposite page.



GROWTH OF A STAG'S HORNS IN ONE SEASON (PARK)

Drawn from nature in Warnham Court Park, Sussex, as the development took place.

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10th March, the eight-year-old a week or ten days later, and so on to the two-year-olds, who will frequently not cast till the beginning of June. In the case of wild stags the dates are approximately a month later.

An observant forester in Perthshire tells me that when he wishes to obtain good dropped horns he watches the big stags in the evening when they are settling down for the night, as it is generally at this time of the twenty-four hours that they get rid of their appendages. If he sees them shaking their heads frequently, he goes to the spot in the morning, and is often rewarded with a pair or more of antlers, which are his perquisites.

It is a curious thing that red deer do not cast both their horns at the same spot, as wapiti generally do. In 1886 I visited the stretch of "divide" on North Fork, Powder River, Wyoming, which was annually used by the wapiti as their shedding ground in spring before entering the great forests. Here lay some hundreds of pairs of antlers close together bleaching in the western sun, and they were nearly all pairs, and evidently cast together.

In parks big stags frequently cast both their antlers at the same time, but more often the second horn remains fixed, or hangs by a corner for a day longer.

Park stags are clean sometimes as early as 20th July, but as a rule they remain in the velvet till 1st August. Scotch stags rarely commence rubbing before 12th August, and though I have seen a head nearly clean on 2nd August, they are seldom so before 1st September.

Devonshire stags follow much the same rules as Scotch ones, and wild Irish deer are a little earlier.

In the *Field* for October 1896 appeared the following interesting note, on a subject too of which our knowledge is only partial at present, namely whether it is possible for a stag's horn to bleed after it is once complete or not :—

Deer Horns.—In a picture by Sir Edwin Landseer, which is probably well known to many of your readers, a stag is represented standing in the snow over a fallen rival, whose horn he has broken before giving him the fatal thrust.¹ The broken-off end of the horn is bleeding, and has dyed the snow red. As the artist has been criticised for (1) making one stag break another stag's horn in two, and (2) for making the broken-off end of the horn bleed when the snow was deep upon the ground, an incident I witnessed may be of interest as showing that this picture is true to nature. On going up Quinag yesterday for a look round, the stalking being over, I happened to get my glass on to one of the liveliest fights I have ever seen. Two stags were at it hammer and tongs, and the battle was fairly even for a time, when one of them got much the best of it, though he would have certainly lost on a foul, as, as far as I could see, he jumped on his opponent several times when he was down. I watched the defeated one as he slunk off, and could only make out one horn on him, so I climbed up to the scene of the duel, and found this horn which I send for your inspection broken in two about the middle. The horn was bleeding when I picked it up, and drops of blood fell from it on to the snow two hours after. Whether the vanquished stag was sufficiently faithful in his imitation of the picture to die, I do not know; he did not go very far before he

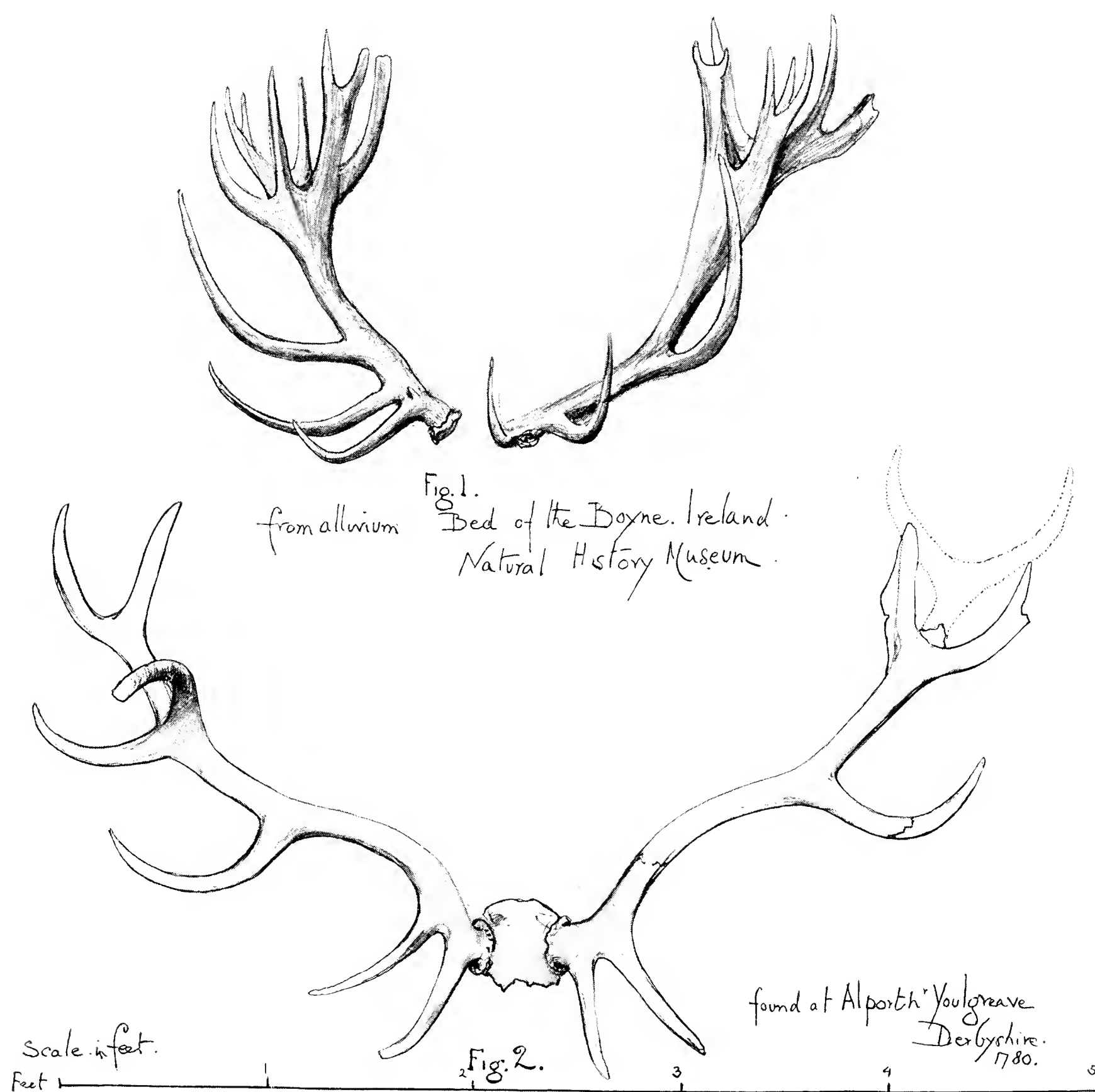


*Antler of the 3rd year
with what appears to be
the 2nd year horn still attached.*

¹ "The Fatal Duel."

lay down, but that might have been from dejection or headache, as I could see no wound on him when I put him up; but anyhow, as far as I am concerned, I feel that Sir Edwin Landseer is avenged on his critics.—W. H. GRENFELL (Loch Assynt Lodge, Sutherland, 14th October).

Shortly afterwards Mr. Grenfell sent the piece of horn up to the *Field* office, and Mr. J. E. Harting and I examined it closely. There was not the very least doubt that there had



The lower figure, found in Derbyshire, 1780, and now in the Natural History Museum, London, is probably the widest stag's head that has been unearthed in Great Britain. The left top branch is missing, and were it placed at a normal angle like the right horn, the extreme span could scarcely have been less than 60 inches, a quite unusual figure even for a wapiti. (Prehistoric.)

recently been a quantity of dark liquid, resembling blood, in the pores of the horn itself, and which had afterwards become dried in the horn in a congealed mass. This certainly goes against popular belief that when the horn of a deer is once formed it is so *much* dead matter, through which no life permeates, but I have always believed that a certain amount of oily matter still existed in deer horns years and years after the animal has been shot and is hanging as a trophy on the walls, and I believe that almost any stag that is shot through the horn in the early part of the season, that is to say soon after the head is complete, would gather congealed blood, or something resembling it, round the parts where the bullet has

struck, if given time to do so. Sir Edmund Loder fired at a stag in Kintail in 1894; the projectile struck and pierced the left horn just above the coronet, and the animal fell over stunned for the moment; he, however, quickly recovered and was soon out of sight. Four or five days afterwards, however, the stag, which had a marked peculiarity and was easily recognisable, walked right up to the same sportsman again and was killed. The sides of the horn, round the old bullet-hole, were entirely covered with congealed blood.

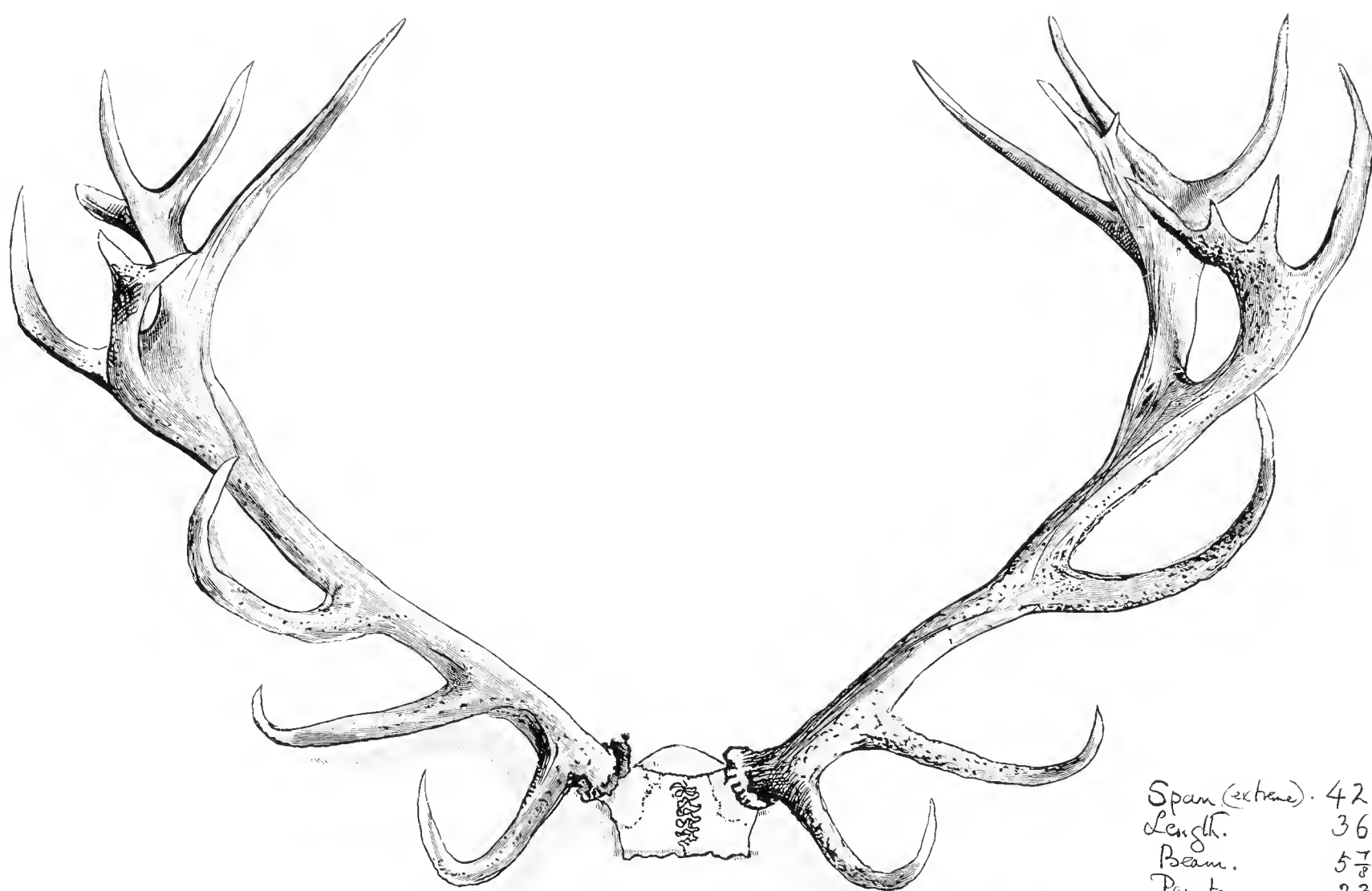
In the early part of the season I do not think that, though insensible, the horns are any more dead, in the strictest sense of the term, than the winter feathers of wading birds are in



HEAD OF A STAG TAKEN FROM THE PEAT MOSS AT COMBERMERE, CHESHIRE
In the possession of the Duke of Westminster. (Prehistoric.)

the spring, as the American naturalists would have us believe. A certain communication still seems to exist through the pedicle with the vital forces, but its effects are not immediately apparent to the eye. When one sees the horns off a deer in the winter, or even earlier, we see nothing to induce us to suppose there is any sign of nerves, pulses, or traversing fluids. The whole is as hard and dry as a Boer sermon. What one would like to see are the horns sawn across in the middle above the tray shortly after completion, and left on the head of the stag; then, I cannot help thinking, we should find something exuding. Next season I hope to try some experiments in this line.

There is no doubt that certain fluids do exist in deer horns for years which are not apparent at the time of death. My reader has probably some stags' heads hanging up on his



Span (extreme).	42 $\frac{1}{2}$
Length.	36.
Beam.	5 $\frac{7}{8}$
Points.	23.

Sir Douglas Brooke's Irish Red deer head.

This fine head is generally supposed to be the largest and most perfectly formed yet recovered from the Irish peat bogs. Mr. Williams received it from the south of Ireland, but its exact locality is unknown. (Prehistoric.)



LORD POWERSCOURT'S IRISH RED DEER HEAD. (PREHISTORIC)

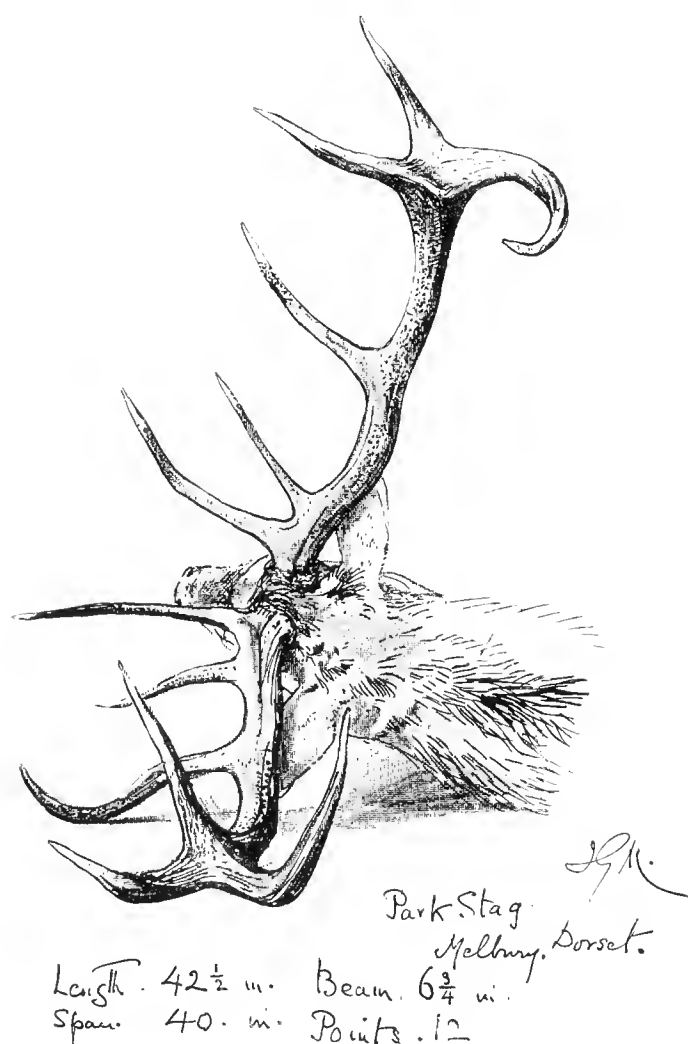
An unusually fine example from a Kerry bog. In the possession of Lord Powerscourt. Points, 19; length, 36 in.; span, 37 $\frac{1}{2}$; circum. at base, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$.

walls, and when he has taken them down and been examining them he may have noticed how exceedingly greasy or oily to the touch this or that head has felt. Now this is nothing but the horns "sweating" as it were, and the oily matter forcing its way through the outer coating to the surface.

Now for a rum story, which, however, is perfectly true. One day my old friend Mr. J. E. Harting was talking to Captain Marriott (he that was recently collared by the brigands close to Smyrna) about curiosities of natural history, when the gallant captain mentioned the fact that in the mess of the 9th Norfolk Regiment at Aldershot there was the head of a Burmese stag (*Cervus eldi*) from the horns of which drops of blood had been falling steadily at intervals for the last seven or eight years. This was sufficiently extraordinary to warrant an inspection, so Mr. Harting went down and saw



PARK STAG



the head hanging up in the mess-room. On close inspection there was a drop of what looked like blood ready to fall from a crack or small hole just underneath one of the brow points. A plate had always been kept under the head for years which caught the drops as they fell at intervals. Mr. Harting had at first expected that some joke was going on, so had rather laughed at the whole affair, but here the exudation was taking place under his eyes, and continues even unto this day, unless the head has been removed. My friend very wisely caught the drop in a small bottle and took it to Professor Stewart at the Royal College of Surgeons, who microscopically examined it, afterwards reporting that the exudation was not blood but a dark mixture like it composed of mucus and grease.

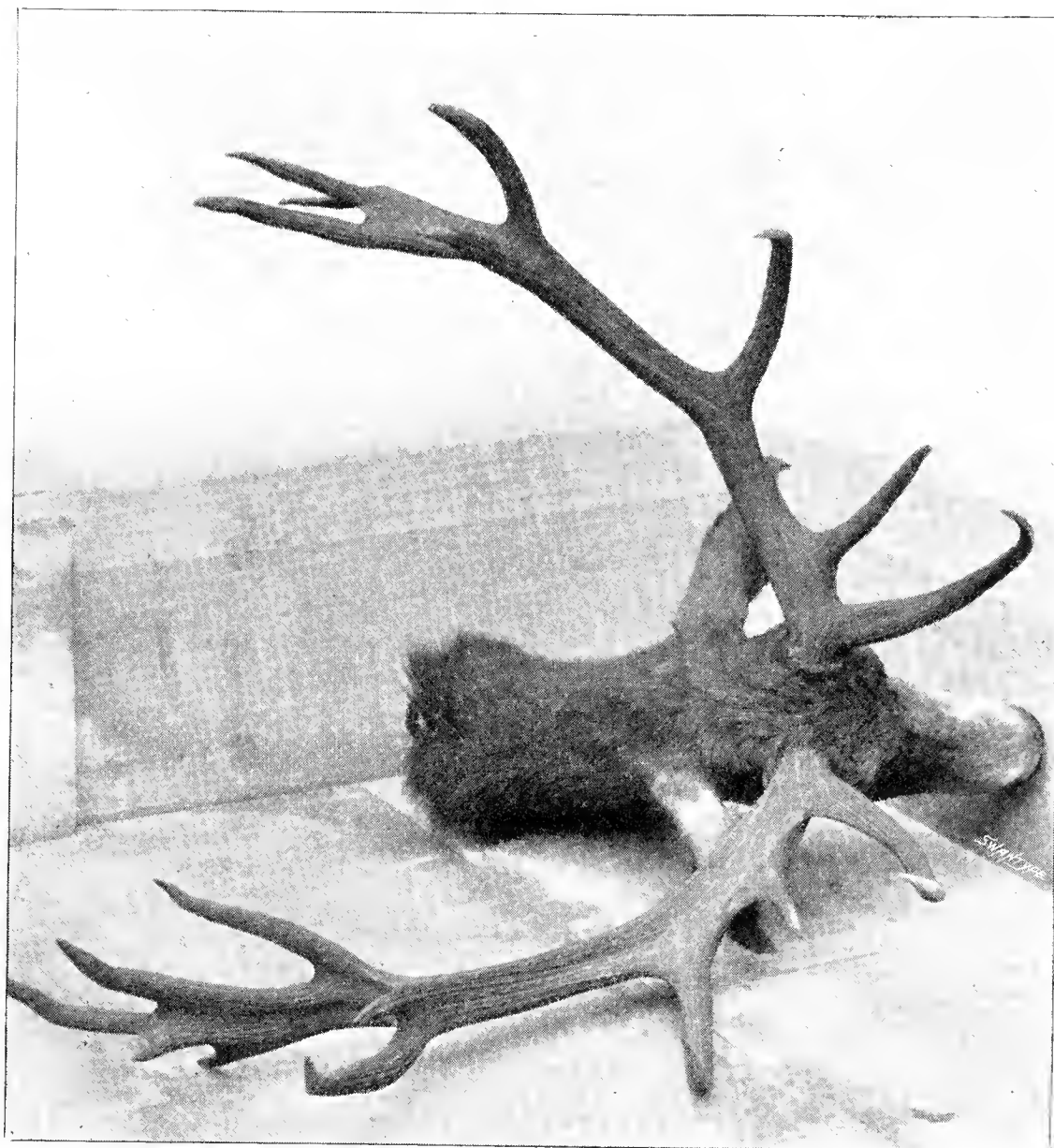
When the velvet begins to strip off the completed antler it leaves on the surface of the horn a small amount of gelatinous moisture which is ready to take on colour after some days' exposure to the sun and air. The idea that the animal goes out of his way to

find certain trees on which to rub his horns and colour them is absurd. His motto is the same as Longfellow's :—

That is best which lieth nearest ;

and when instinct tells him that the horns are complete and the velvet is becoming dry on the surface, he simply rubs and cleans them on any substance that is raised from the ground, presenting a suitable roughness.

A stag in a park does not go and hunt out a tree whose colour he desires to transmit to



A WELBECK STAG'S HEAD. (PARK)
Points, 19 ; length, $35\frac{1}{2}$; span inside, 32 ; beam 7.

his bonnet, and he will just as soon rub against the boards protecting young trees, the palings of the park, whether iron or wood, or any old stump that comes handy. So the stag living in fir, birch, or beech woods uses the tree that comes first, and may thereby colour his horns to a certain extent. Exposure to the weather plays no small part in affecting the invisible life which, I think, still exists in and on the surface of the horn for some time after it is clean, but of this we at present know little.¹ More than half the stags in Scotland never touch a tree at all when they are cleaning, nor, in fact, are they near them.

I remember seeing a party of about twenty-five at Guisachan in the middle of August, and eight or ten of them were cleaning their horns on rocks and grassy hummocks. During

¹ Just as this work goes to press this point is very properly referred to in an editorial note on this subject in the *Field*. It was noticed that the deer in the Zoological Gardens frayed their horns annually against *painted iron bars*, and even then they were of the normal colour. It concludes with the sensible suggestion that "this is due to the chemical change or oxygenation which takes place in the superficially deposited blood (?) stains caused by fraying, as they gradually dry on exposure to the air and get rubbed into the bony surface while still in a sensitive condition. The intensity of the colour will naturally vary in individuals."

this process of rubbing I believe that very little colouring matter goes on to the horns, or how is it we see stags with nearly white ones when the velvet has been off several days?

As an illustration of this I would call the reader's attention to the heads of two big park stags figured on p. 102. I shot these in Warnham Park at the beginning of August 1895, and had watched them closely every day from the day they had cleaned their heads against



HEAD OF A BIG STOKE STAG, 1872. (PARK)

certain boards protecting the thorn trees. They were clean on the same day, and when shot seven days later one was still quite white, whilst the other was a dark drab, as will be seen in the photo. I have often noticed too that stags that have dark-coloured velvet will, when the horns are clean, have dark-coloured horns. This as much as anything will prove the weakness of the theory of selected staining matters.

Observers are apt to lose sight of the fact that the red stag is not by nature a dweller in the dark and open moorlands; he has been forced there by man, and by colouring his antlers in the peat he is only following the great universal law amongst all wild creatures,

which teaches them that assimilation to surroundings is their greatest protection. In deer forests where peat lands predominate, the majority of stags have dark-coloured horns, for if they allowed them to remain in their ordinary drab-coloured tones, which properly assimilate to trees and grass, the chances of detection would be increased. The deer know this, and take precautions.

The effect of plunging their horns in peat, as four out of six Highland stags do sooner



PALMATED AND ORDINARY TYPES, WARNHAM COURT, 1895. (PARK)

The left-hand figure was a very light-coloured stag with light-coloured velvet. The right-hand figure was a very dark-coloured stag with dark-coloured velvet. Both these deer rubbed clean the same day (29th July) on the same material (wooden boards placed against trees), and at the end of one week, when killed, were as above.

or later during the season, is to stain them dark at once, the points only being worn light by constant friction.

Many Highland stags wallow in their peat baths *at once*, but the majority wait till the approach of the rutting season before taking the regular course of *bains de marais*. When once this immersion has taken place the stags' horns remain dark for the rest of the season, peat being a regular dye.¹

¹ Since the above was written the discussion on this subject in the *Field* has closed. I quite agree with Allan Gordon Cameron in all he says as to colouring of antlers. The eventual character of the horns is undoubtedly due to the nature of the

Early in the season, in a big Northern forest where the deer have every kind of ground to roam over, we of course see them with both light and dark coloured antlers, but towards the end over 90 per cent are a blackish brown. This is so sure to be the case, and so much



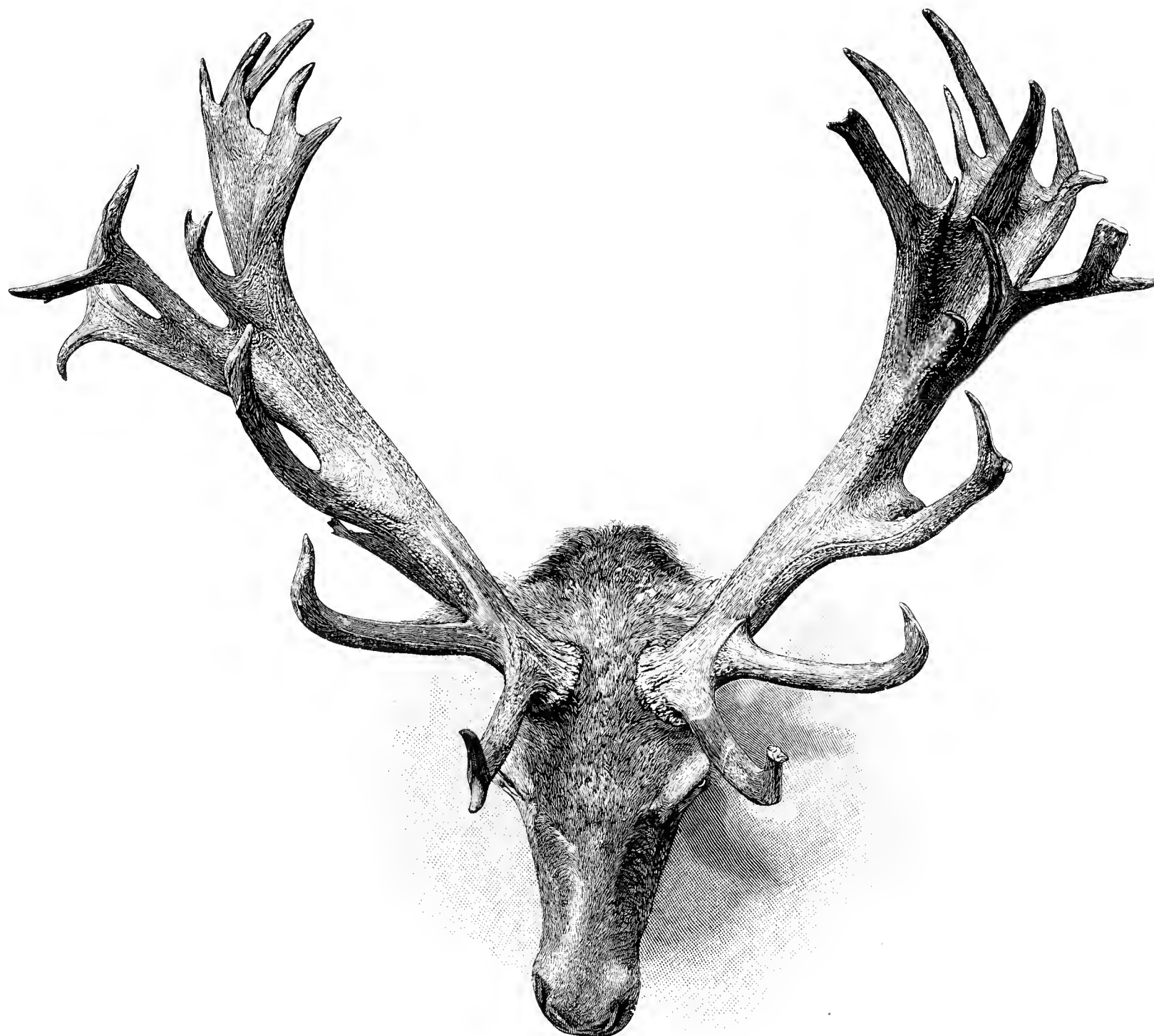
A GOOD EXAMPLE OF PALMATION. (PARK)

are these dark antlers with white tips admired, that Mr. Macleay has found it necessary to put all his stags' heads into his private peat wallow.

I shall now endeavour to give some account of the best stags' heads which have come under my notice, and have divided them into the following classes :—

individual, for when additional colouring takes place it is due to the necessity of assimilation to environment. Sir Douglas Brooke too, I see, has called attention to the importance of the velvet question in stags that eventually become light or dark antlered.

1. STAGS' HEADS—of recent or prehistoric times recovered from the earth in (*a*) England, (*b*) Scotland, (*c*) Ireland.
2. PARK STAGS' HEADS.
3. HEADS OF STAGS KEPT UNDER SEMI-FERAL CONDITIONS.
4. WILD ENGLISH STAGS' HEADS.
5. WILD IRISH STAGS' HEADS.
6. WILD SCOTCH STAGS' HEADS—Taken from examples killed (*a*) early in the present century, and (*b*) within the last thirty years.



THE GREAT WARNHAM HEAD, 1894. (PARK)

Measurements—Points, 44; length, 33 in.; span (over all), $45\frac{1}{2}$ in.; beam above tray, 7 in.; beam immediately above tray, 9 in.

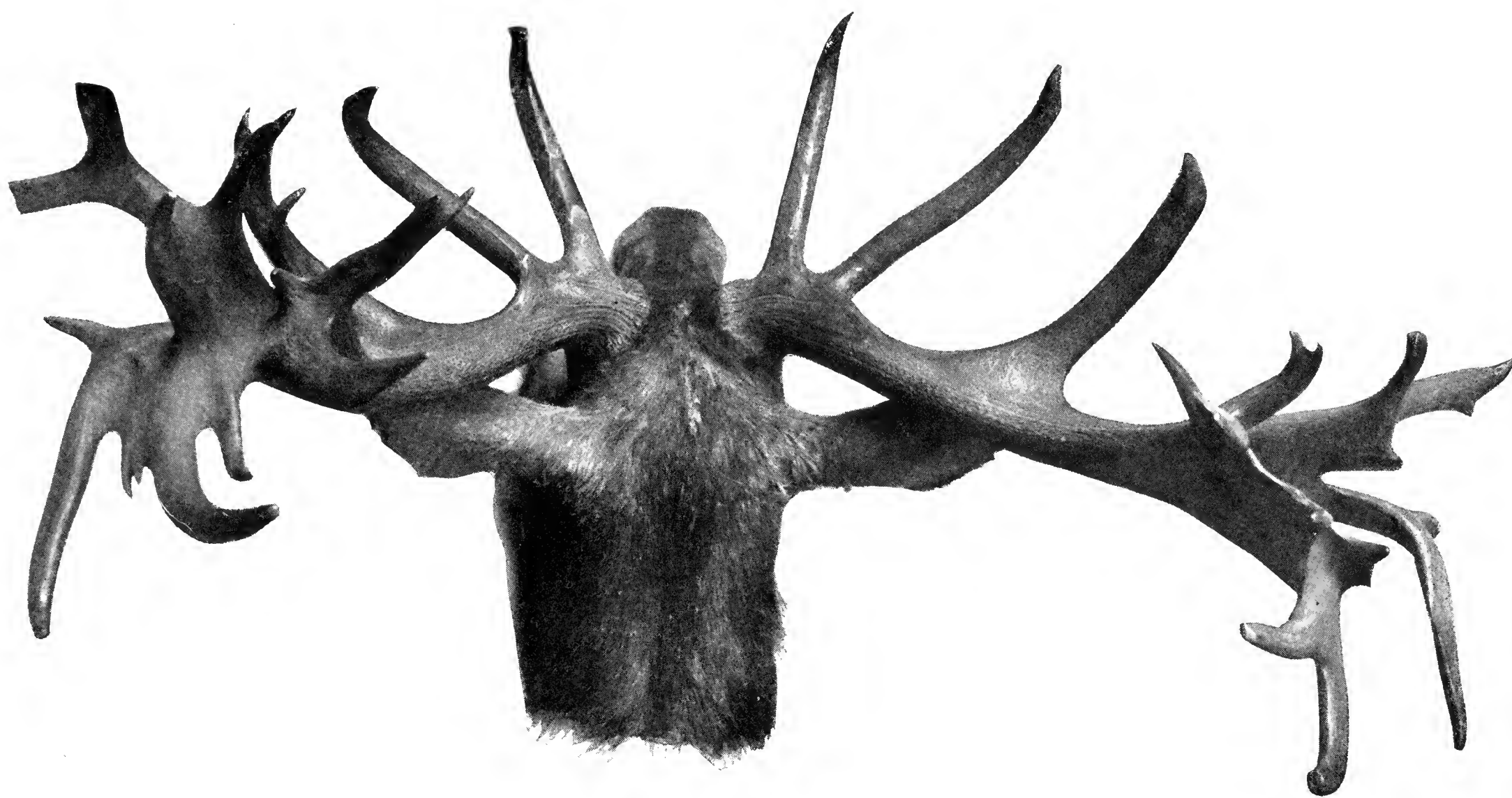
1. STAGS' HEADS

OF RECENT AND PREHISTORIC TIMES RECOVERED FROM THE SOIL IN (*a*) ENGLAND, (*b*) SCOTLAND,
AND (*c*) IRELAND

The oldest stratum in Great Britain where red deer horns have been found is the Red Crag at Newbourne. From the period indicated above, at which we can only guess, down through the ages of the Pliocene and the times of the silt of the ossiferous caves, through the Pleistocene ages to the growth of the peat bogs, there is a continuous chain of evidence showing the abundance of red deer in prehistoric times.

Certainly one of the most remarkable heads is that of a stag which was unearthed in

1780 from a quarry at Alport, Youlgreave, Derbyshire (see p. 96). It took more than a little hunting to rediscover this specimen in the ossiferous caves beneath Cromwell Road, but my friend Sir Edmund Loder volunteered to have a day's search in the vaults and look over the great collection of duplicates, which are not as a rule seen by the public. He told me of his find, so a few days afterwards, with the assistance of Mr. Barlow, I rigged up the specimen, placing the broken left horn at the same angle as the right, and made a sketch of it. I must confess I was astonished at the span of this head; all the other measurements too are exceptional. The back top branch of the left horn is missing, but were it placed on the head in the same position as that on the perfect right horn, the span over all could not be very much less than



THE BIG WARNHAM HEAD (TOP VIEW), 1894

58 or 60 inches, which we know to be a remarkable width even for a first-class wapiti head (see p. 96).

There are other splendid examples in the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, notably a great horn found in the gravel deposits at Ilford in Essex, a black and rough horn of more recent date found at Hammersmith, and a splendid complete head in the British Gallery, presented by Mr. Jabez Allies, found near Worcester.

In the lacustrine deposits of Yorkshire and in the peat bogs of Hampshire good heads are frequently found, and Mr. Wolfe Barry informs me that in making railway cuttings in Northamptonshire and South Wales good and complete heads have sometimes been unearthed. He has also several fine specimens obtained during the making of the Cardiff docks. The peat bogs, however, yield the most beautiful heads, as the horns are generally perfect and in good preservation. The Duke of Westminster kindly sends me a photograph of a splendid specimen obtained recently from the peat moss at Combermere, Cheshire.

In Scotland, as excavations and cuttings are seldom made to any depth, red deer heads,

though no doubt numerous, are seldom brought to light. I have seen good specimens in Brawl Castle, Caithness (before the collection was dispersed), found in the sands on the north-west coast. In Methven Castle there are two somewhat broken heads of great size and thickness, the top branches being thicker than any English specimens I have seen. They were found recently in Methven Moss, near Perth. A head, of which I have a sketch, was lately found at Kinloch-Moidart, with a span between the cups of $47\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It is very curious to notice the difference in the form and type of these ancient Scotch antlers and those



HEAD OF THE GREAT WARNHAM STAG, BORN 1880, SHOT 1894, SHOWING SERIES OF DROPPED ANTLERS

1888, 29 points.
1890, 34 points.

1892, 47 points.
1894, 45 points.
1893, 45 points.

1889, 34 points.
1891, 37 points.

The numbers beneath the horns denote their weight in pounds. 1893 Measurements—length, 34 in.; span (about) 48 in.; beam, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 19 in. across the cup.

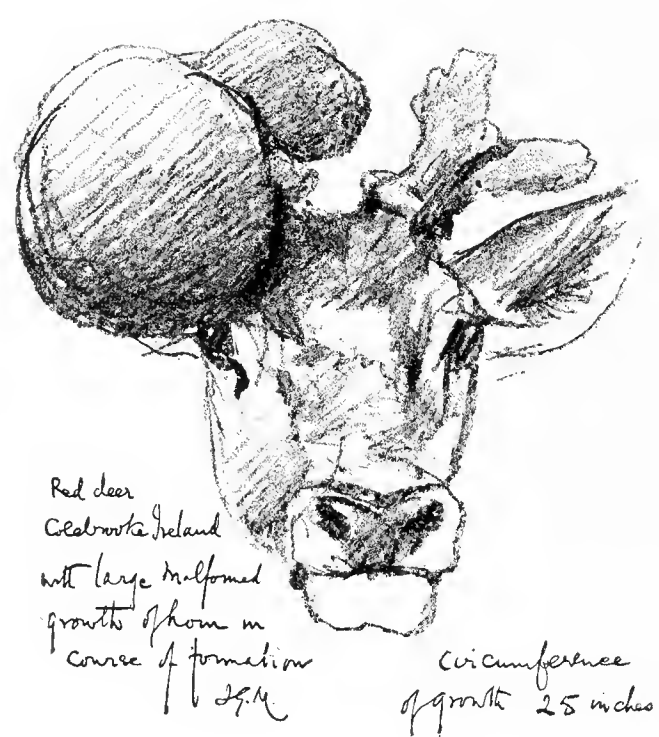
of the present day. They are as a rule immensely thick, palmated towards the top, and not of good span, though there are exceptions. This form of horn-growth goes far to show that at the time when these great deer lived, Scotland must have been one great forest of trees.

In the Irish heads recovered from the peat bogs we see the finest type of horn-growth thrown out by any red deer, past or present, in our islands. They are seldom great heads, but their symmetry is undeniable. The brows, bays, and trays are always perfectly formed and beautifully curved. The tops, though sometimes throwing out as many as 7 or 8 points on each crown, are remarkable for their elegance and the absence of clumsy palmation. These fine heads are common, and good specimens are to be seen in nearly every collection in this country, public or private.



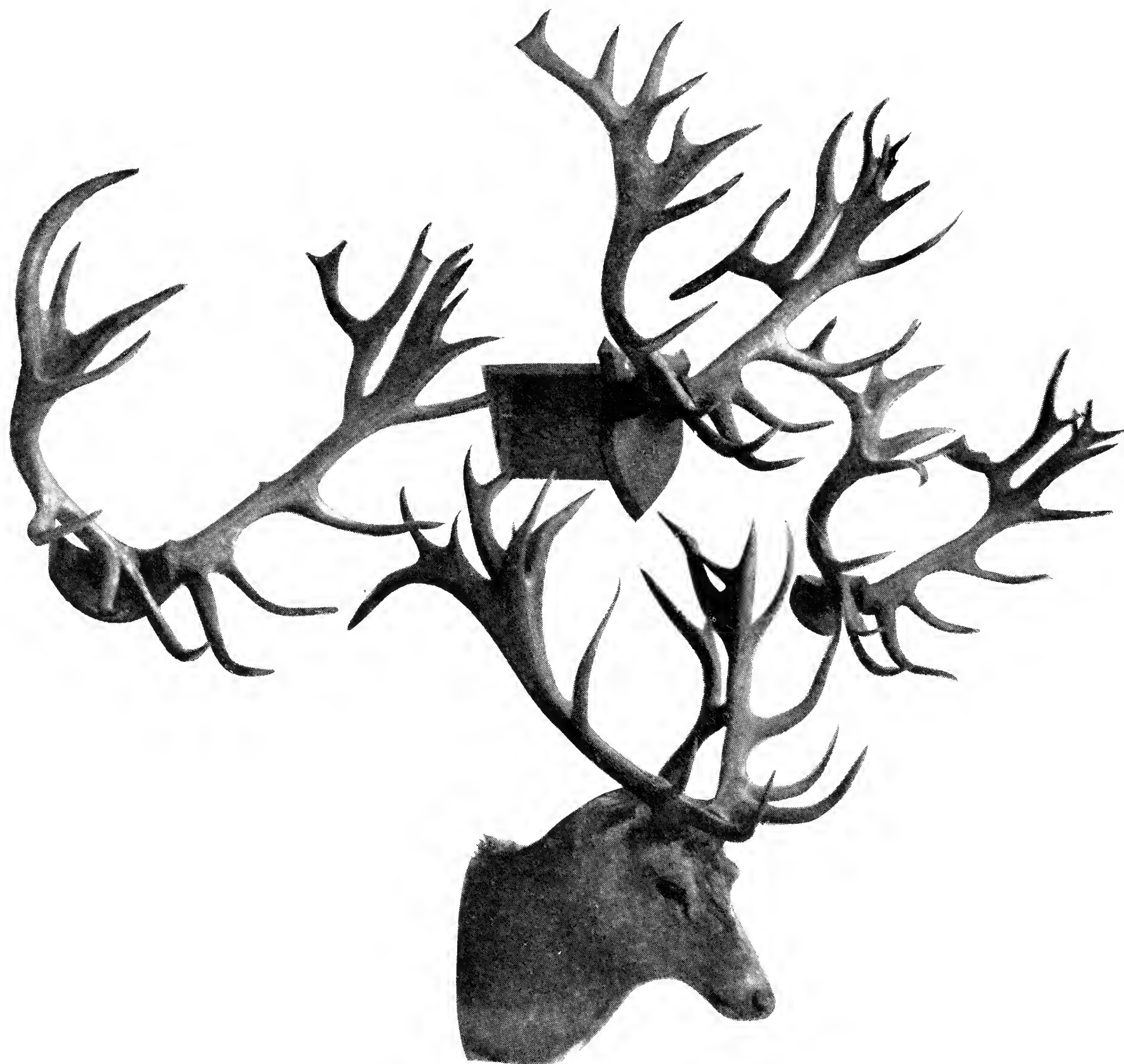
MALFORMED GROWTH OF STAG'S HEAD (GERMAN)

Due to operation. In this instance the horn has never properly solidified, but remains in a spongy formation, and is consequently of small weight.



MALFORMED PARK STAGS' HEADS, WELBECK

The old head dredged from the Boyne at Drogheda (see p. 96), one horn of which was figured by Owen, is now hanging in the fossil mammal gallery at South Kensington. It is a remarkable example of the earlier Irish heads, but does not present the same beauty of form as those recovered from the peat bogs. Of the latter the best example I have seen is the splendid 23-pointer in the possession of Sir Douglas Brooke at Colebrooke. Another fine one is at Powerscourt, and there are many others not very far inferior to these (see p. 98).

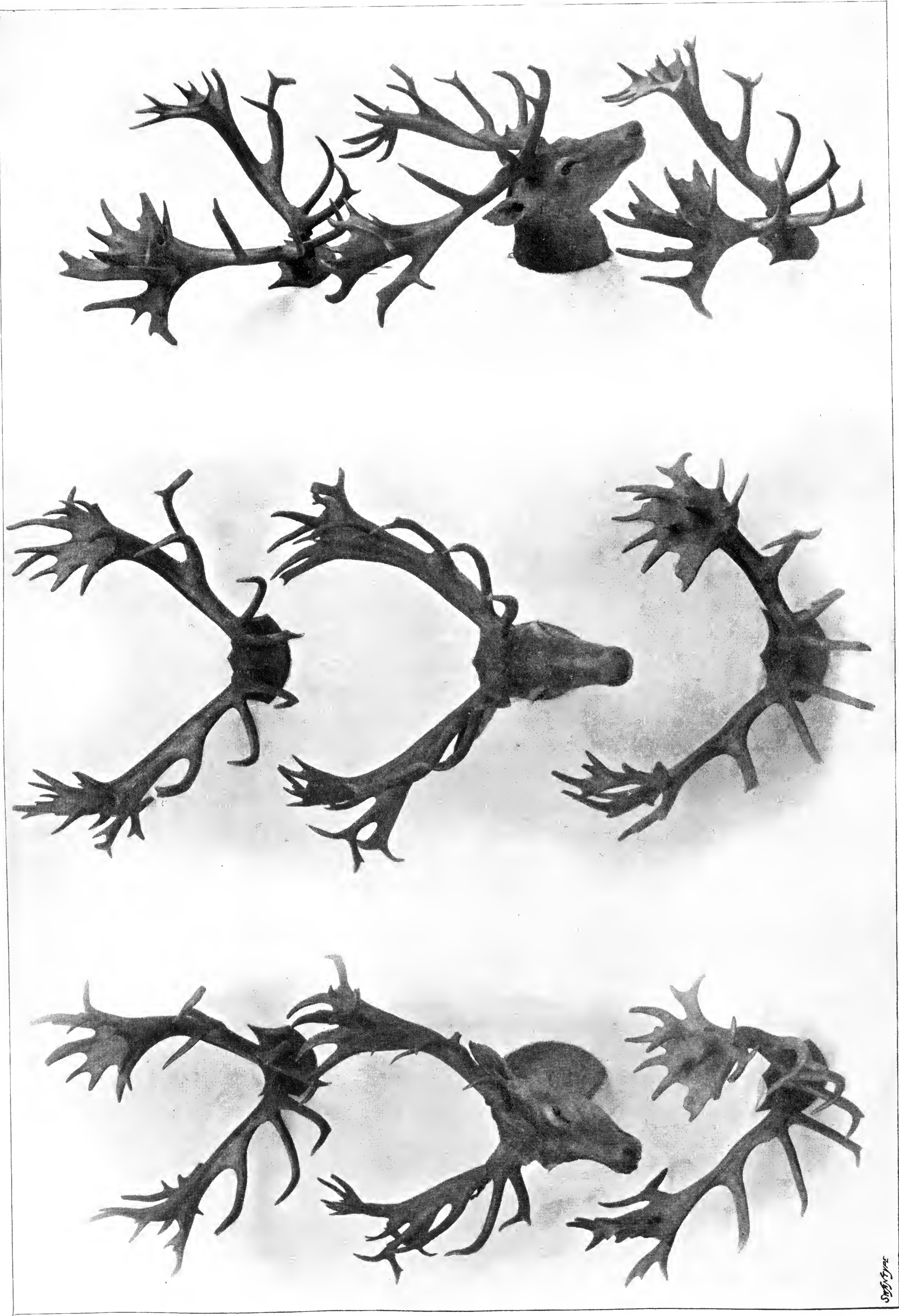


HEAD OF A BIG WARNHAM STAG

Killed in 1891, nine years old, 31 stone clean. In these heads may be noted the constancy of the bifurcation on the left horn during four successive years.
Stuffed head, 23 points; length, 37 in.; span 37 in.; beam $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.; length of bifurcation, 20 in.

2. PARK STAGS' HEADS

Although the heads of park deer in many cases indicate their origin from German stock and are of no very great interest to the sportsman, from the naturalist's point of view the effects on horn-growth of good feeding and careful preservation are worth studying, for we are thereby taught many things by means of which our race of wild deer may be improved. The heads of park deer do not as a rule present that beautiful blending of roughness and symmetry which is so marked a feature in the wild animal, yet to stigmatise them as entirely



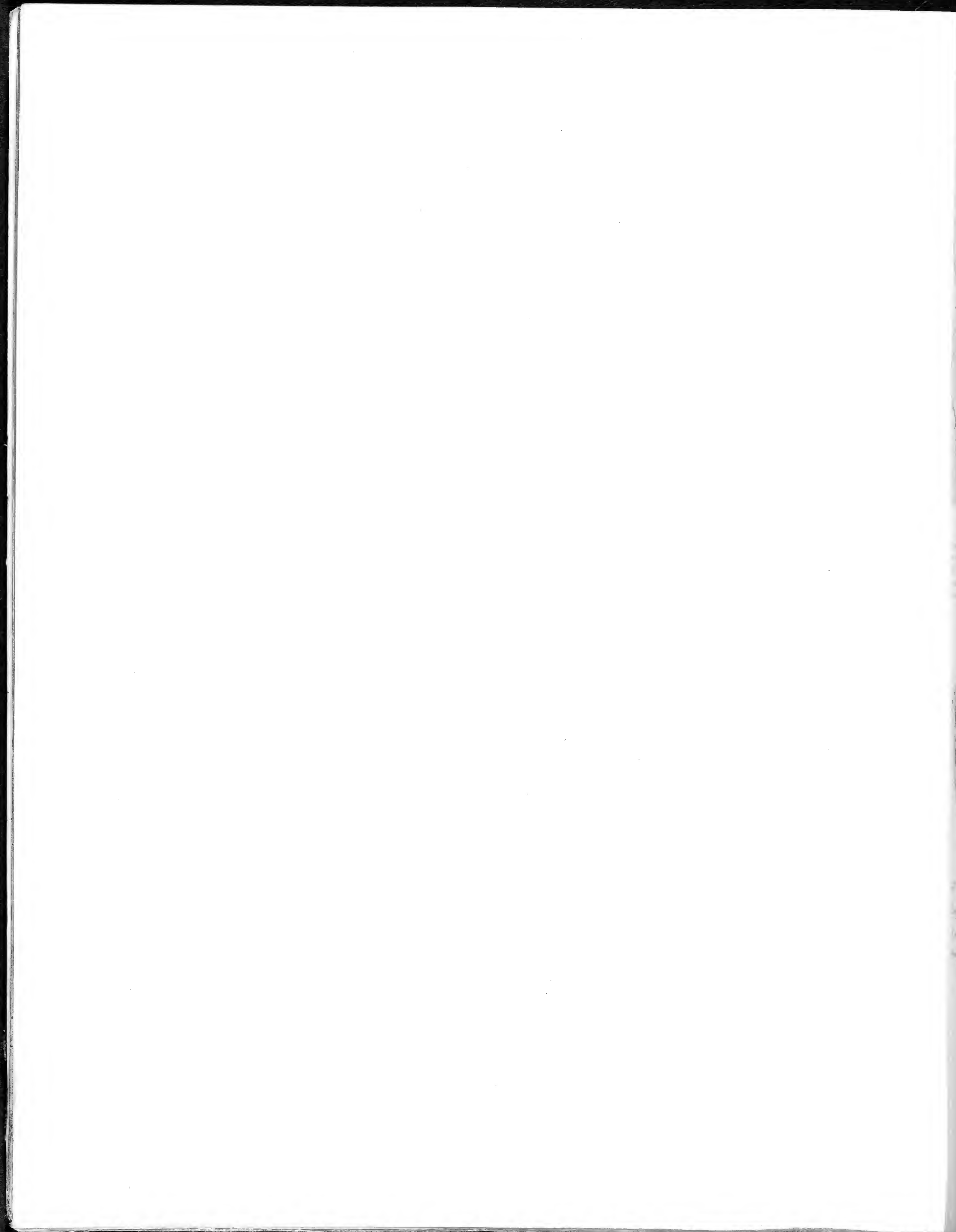
THE THREE BEST YEARS OF THE GREAT WARMHAM HEAD, FROM THREE POINTS OF VIEW

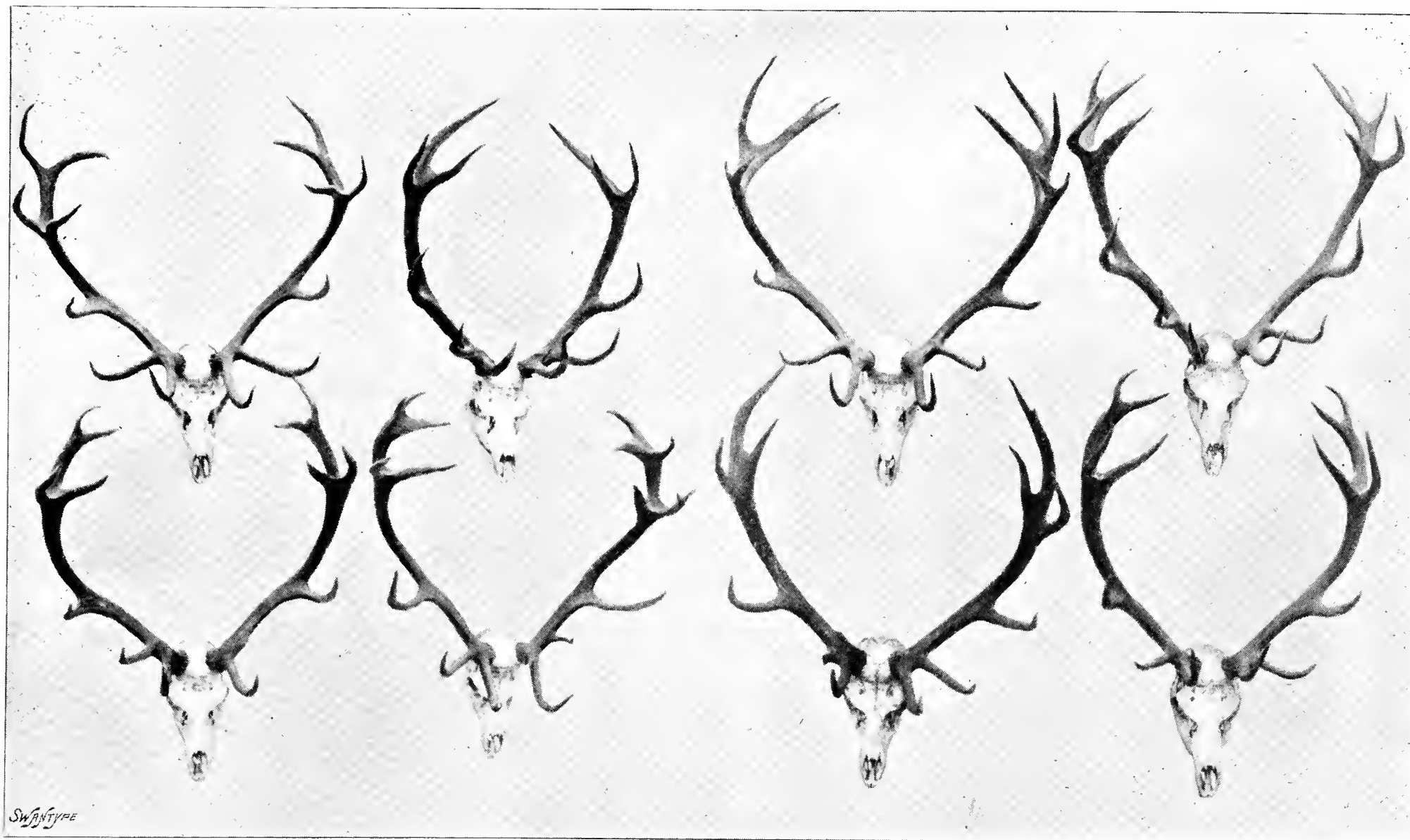
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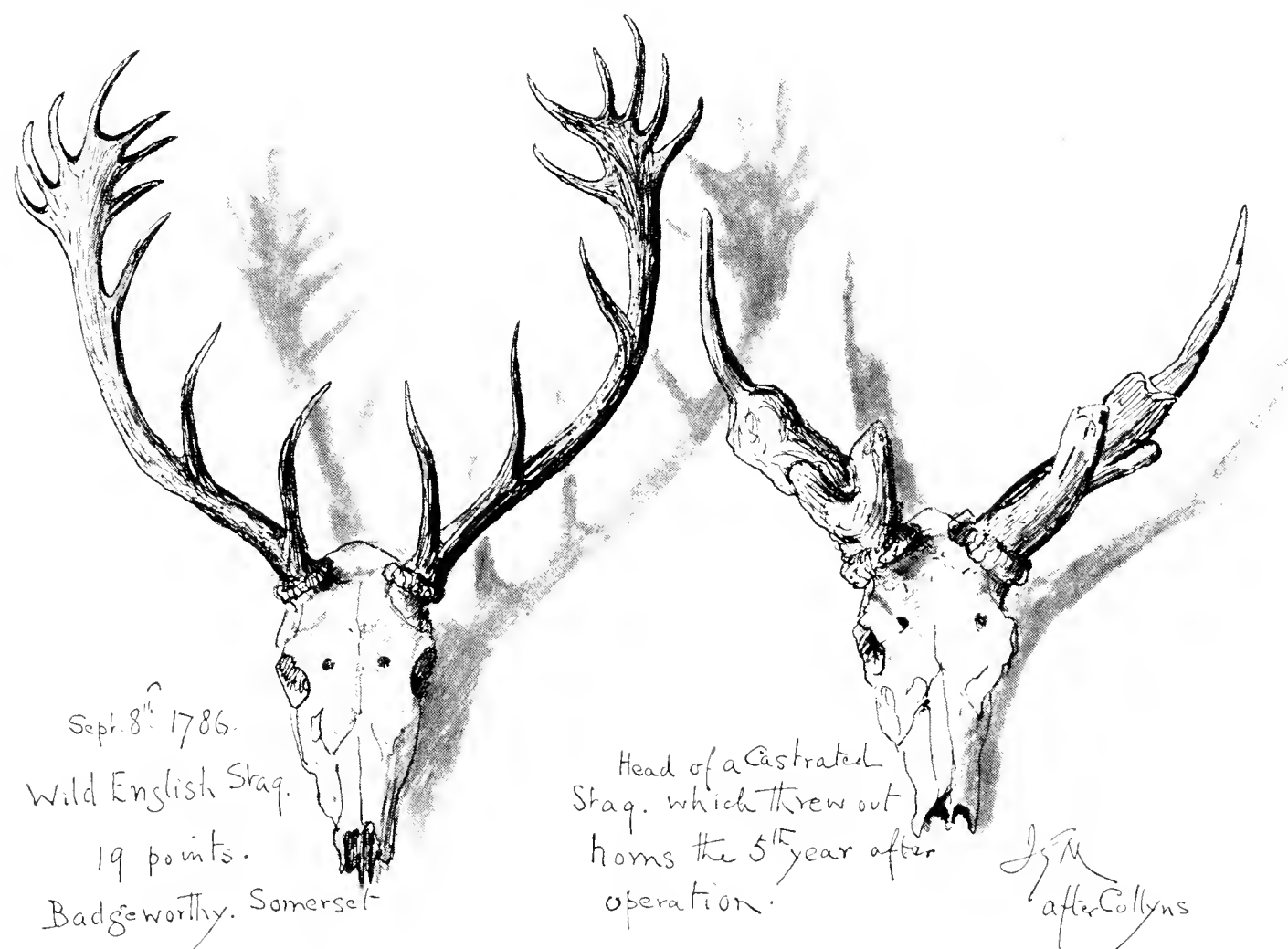
S. J. S. S.





STAGS' HEADS GROWN UNDER SEMI-FERAL CONDITIONS, COLEBROOKE, IRELAND

"Huxley," 9 years, shot 1884. 25 stone clean, 14 points, length 39 in.	"Abraham," 7 years, shot 1891. 22 stone 7 lbs. clean, 12 points, length 42½ in. and 40 in.	"Moses," 9 years, shot 1893. 25 stone clean, 16 points, length 39 in.	"Tyndall," 8 years, shot 1883. 23 stone 11 lbs. clean, 16 points, length 40 in. and 37½ in.
"The Crab," 9 years, shot 1893. 14 points, length 39½ in. and 38½ in.	"The Sultan," 10 years, shot 1894. 24 stone 9 lbs. clean, 19 points, length 41 in.	"Anak," 11 years, killed by another stag. 13 points, length 40½ in.	"The Rebel," 8 years, shot 1886. 26 stone 11 lbs., 14 points, length 41 in.



By kind permission of Messrs. Longman.

unlovely is a gross libel, for, strange to say, there are one or two parks in England which, on account of certain qualities in the soil and feeding, produce heads which are quite as wild and Highland in their character as any past or present Scotch heads, which is a very remarkable fact. In Lord Ilchester's park at Melbury in Dorsetshire I saw two stags—a 12- and a 14-pointer—bearing the most beautiful "Highland" heads imaginable. Not only were their shapes perfect, but the horns were rough and black, with sharp yellow points. All the dropped horns in Melbury present this beautiful dark type, and they are all the more remarkable from the fact that there are no peat wallows where the deer can roll and



A TYPICAL IRISH HEAD (WILD)
Shot by Lord Castlerosse at Killarney, Co. Kerry, 1894.

colour their horns. To cite another instance, Colonel Gordon-Cumming at Forres has in his smoking-room, hanging next to the big Glenmoriston head, the head of a stag from a Lincolnshire park, which might pass muster anywhere for a Scotchman.

The perfect head of an adult stag in a wild state is one of 12 points. When, however, the deer, owing to better feeding and general conditions of life, is obliged to distribute his increased mass of osseous matter in some form or other, he does so either by (1) greater increase of the beam throughout, although maintaining the original form of 12 points; (2) palmation in the upper branches; (3) an increased number of branches almost invariably on the tops, with smaller points or snags emanating from them; (4) by means of a branch or bifurcation thrown back well up on the posterior margin; (5) by a combination of any of the above variations.

Descriptions of these various types are unnecessary, as illustrations of them all are given.

I would notice, however, a curious feature with regard to park heads of red deer which throw back a heavy bifurcation. It is confined to one horn only. I have seen about thirty examples of this abnormal growth, and have never seen a park stag throw back from both horns.¹ The unbifurcated one always clubs at the top, throwing off a number of snags to



14-POINTER SHOT AT MUCKROSS, KERRY, BY MR. RALPH SNEYD, 1894

Though the measurements are by no means remarkable, this grand head is considered by many to be the best killed in Muckross of late years. The weight, too, of the animal has probably never been surpassed by a wild Irish stag—29 stone 10 lbs. clean.

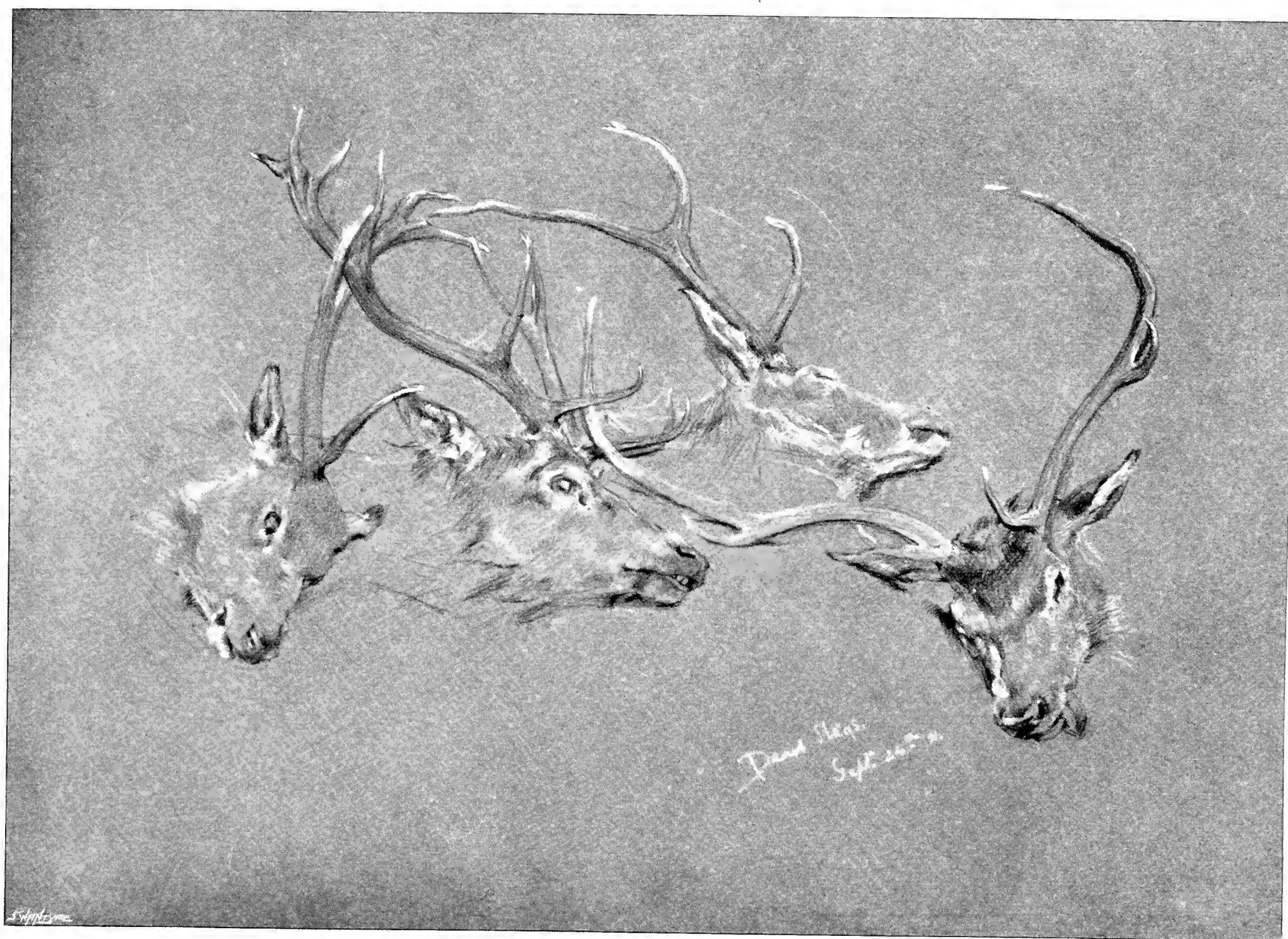
equalise the weight of the two great branches of the other horn. A notable illustration of this may be seen in the figure on p. 108.

This is remarkable, because big wapiti heads which occasionally throw back these great branches occasionally do so on *both* horns.

The great Warnham head, of which I give four illustrations, from all points of view, is doubtless the largest ever grown by a park stag in England. It is a grand example of

¹ In the *Field*, 21st May 1892, Mr. Allan Gordon Cameron gives an outline drawing of a wild Scotch stag's head with two similar tines thrown out from the posterior ridges of the horns. If this is drawn from an actual head it must be almost unique.

unusual palmation, beam, and number of points, another curious feature being that for several years its brows were forked at the point—a very unusual occurrence. This remarkable deer was born in the park at Warnham during the summer of 1880, and even at the early age of four commenced to throw out an extraordinary amount of horn-growth. After the park was dressed with lime and bone-dust the effect was to still further increase what would under any circumstances have been a remarkable head. In 1891, 1892, and 1893 the horn-development was at its best, particularly so in 1892, when the stag was eleven years of age. In 1894, although the head was still extraordinary, and might have thrown

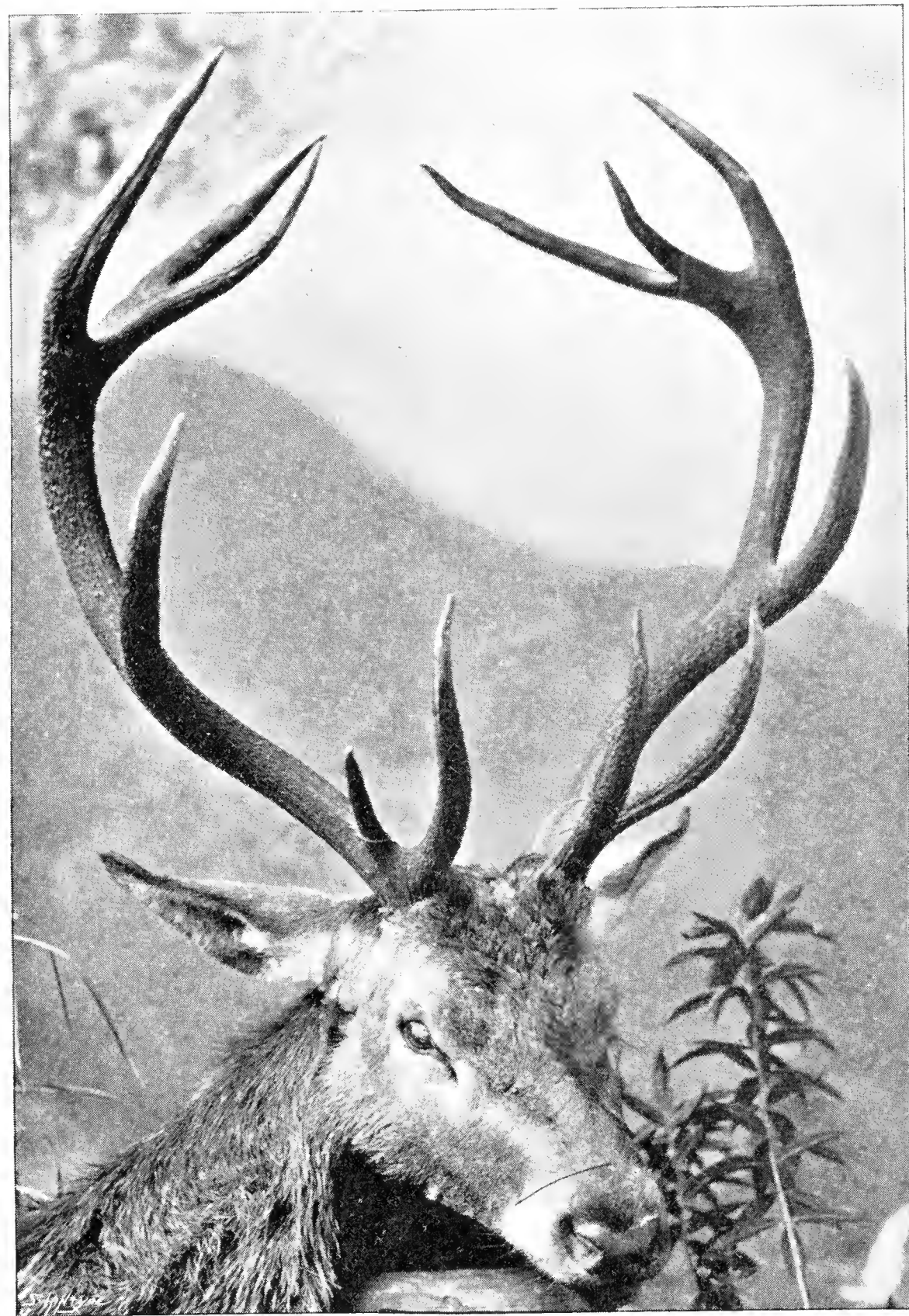


SCOTCH STAGS' HEADS OF TO-DAY

great antlers for another two years, it was thought advisable to shoot him, as he was falling away in the quarters, as well as showing decay in the horn-points. I saw this stag alive in 1890. Even then his horns were so heavy for him that he had an undignified habit of creeping about with his nose almost on the ground.

Personally I do not take very much interest in horn-abnormalities, as they are seldom beautiful and only occasionally interesting. The most curious monstrosity in horn-growth is that obtained by castration. This operation when performed on an adult stag is generally fatal, but when the animal survives it during horn-growing time, the results are similar to the German head figured on p. 107. When the velvet is rubbed off, the horns are seen to be imperfectly formed and spongy. There being no true bone in their composition, they

do not solidify, and are consequently of small weight. These horns are never cast, and the animal rarely lives to any age. The late Sir Victor Brooke made the experiment of partially castrating an adult stag at Colebrooke, but the animal died whilst its horns were growing, though it is very interesting to note from the illustration I have made of this head (p. 107) that the deer was growing one perfect horn on the side on which the operation took



A TYPICAL WILD SCOTCH HEAD OF FORTY YEARS AGO
Shot at Erchless, Ross-shire.

place, whilst from the other pedicle was springing forth a hollow mass of malformed epidermis covered by skin.

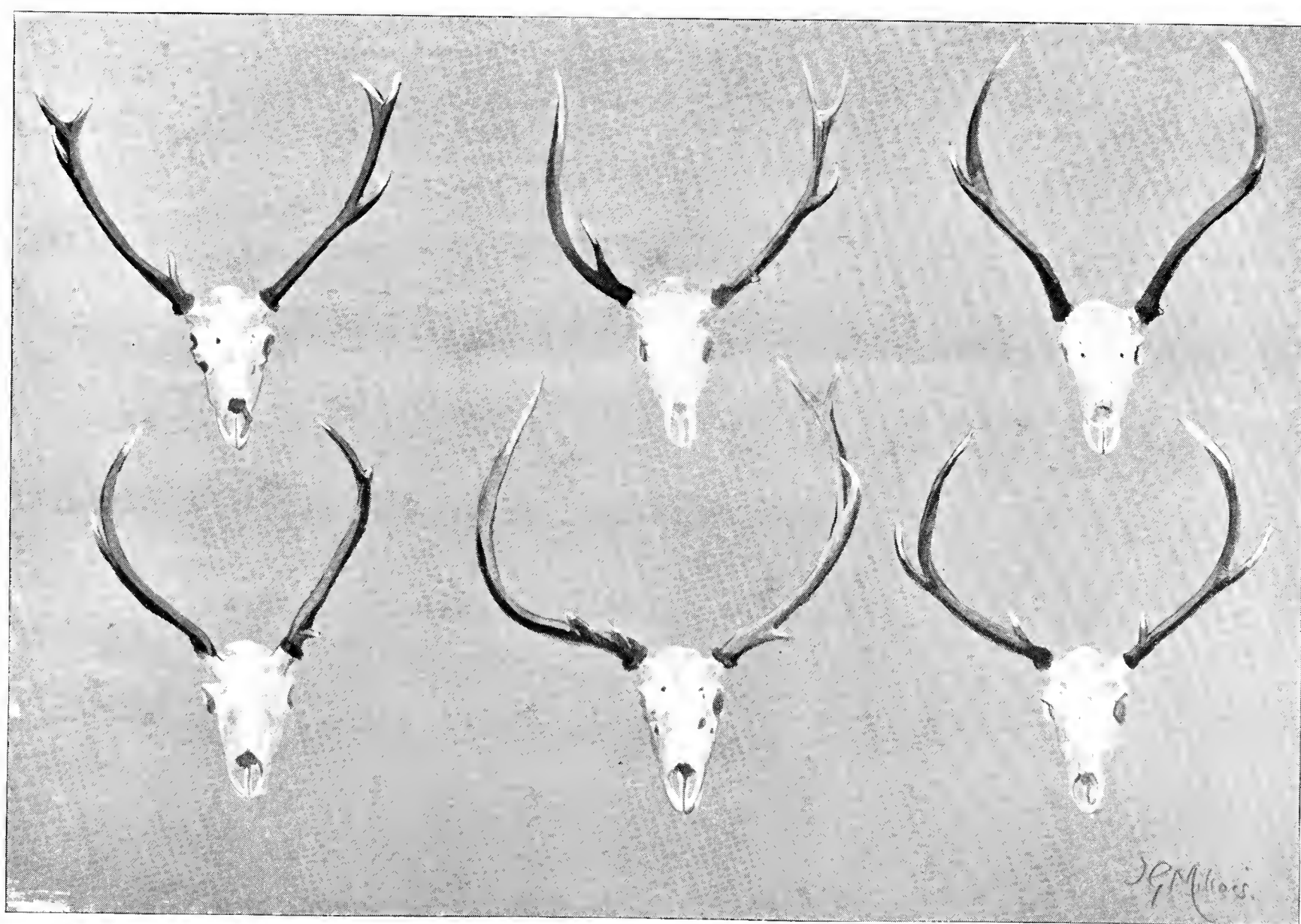
A very curious abnormality of this description is given by Collins of a head in his possession, the figure of which I have copied from his excellent book. He says, "This was the head of an old stag which had shown the Captain's hounds many a good run in the Cheltenham country as an uncartered deer. He became at last so vicious that it was thought advisable to emasculate him and saw off his horns just above the brow antlers. He remained thus shorn of his honours for four years without any appearance of fresh growth of horn, when, to the surprise of every one, a thin spire of horn, 6 or 8 inches

in length, was thrown out on each stump. Possibly good feeding may have caused this,



STAGS' HEADS

Shot by Sir J. E. Millais at Kinloch-Luichart, 1867, and sketched by him at the time.



DETERIORATION DUE TO ISOLATION

These are the last six heads shot by a friend in October 1896 in a well-known Inverness-shire forest. Only a short time ago this ground produced some of the best heads annually. Now it is all fenced. The animals breed in, and in the winter feeding is wretched; of shelter there is very little, and needless to say the place is let to a new tenant every year. These stags were killed in October, when the best could be picked, and of these only one has brow points over 4 inches. The whole season's heads were like this with one exception.

but I am strongly inclined to think that the operation had not been completely performed upon him."

3. SEMI-FERAL HEADS

I have thought it best to divide the heads grown by deer restrained within certain limits into two classes, namely, those animals living under almost domestic conditions—like sheep and cattle, and growing, for the most part, large, smooth, and palmated antlers—and those living in large enclosures, which were formerly their actual homes. The latter are more or less wild in all their habits, and have to be hunted for and shot with very much the same care as in many a Scotch forest. Not that the sport is here compared with Highland stalking, any more than Highland stalking can be compared with certain phases of big game shooting. However, it is enough to state that these animals grow rough dark horns of



UNUSUAL HORN-GROWTH DUE TO ABUNDANT WINTER FEED (PROBABLY ARTIFICIAL)

Example of a wild Scotch stag (Braemar) which has had unusual feed and shelter during winter and the following summer. Owner, Col. Gordon-Cumming.

similar quality and shape to the wild ones, only that they are of rather greater size. There are several park forests of this description.

In Ireland there is Colebrooke, where the deer grow in the Home park to great perfection both in head and body, and in the dining-room there is a splendid series of heads which have been shot by Sir Douglas Brooke and his late father. As will be seen from the photograph kindly sent me by the present Baronet, the heads are of beautiful symmetry and unusual length, the average being nearly 40 inches. The horns conform to the type of the wild Irish stags of old, and when allowed to reach their prime are generally 14-pointers. One stag killed in 1894 reached 19 points (see p. 111).¹

¹ The Home Park at Colebrooke is heavily wooded, therefore the horns are seen to be, as one would naturally expect, fairly close set and of no width at the tops. In direct contrast to these see the fine semi-feral head (end of preface) from Castle Wellan, where the deer live on an open heather-covered mountain, with very little wood shelter at the base. These two types of horn-growth are splendid examples of the *almost immediate effects of environment*.

Drummond Castle, Lord Ancaster's beautiful seat in Perthshire, is another good example of park forest.

The great wood of Torlum and the neighbouring estates of Strowan and Glenartney were tenanted by wild wood stags of great size until the year 1832. During that year the Drummond Castle grounds were enclosed, and in the great wood several of the original deer were shut in. One splendid head hangs in the lower gallery of the castle, that of a beast known as "the old stag," which was shot in the wood the following year. I give his measurements in addition to those of the two other splendid heads killed by the present Earl of Ancaster in 1893 :—

Points.	Length.	Span (over all).	Beam.	
12	34½	30	6	Wild wood stag enclosed in Torlum 1832, and shot following year.
12	34½	32	5½	Shot by Lord Ancaster in 1893.
14	36	33	5½	Shot by Lord Ancaster in Torlum Wood 1893. Certainly the best head in Drummond Castle.

These heads are all of great beauty and fine quality, and much resemble those of the Isle of Arran.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of examining some remarkably fine heads of this type (in the hands of Mr. Macleay of Inverness). They were sent in by Mr. Smith of Ardtornish in Mull. One can scarcely draw a hard-and-fast line between the conditions under which these park-forest deer grow their heads and those under which deer live in what is called a wild state on some of the islands off the west coast of Scotland. In many cases it is true the deer are indigenous, but in most the original breed has died out and has been succeeded by modern introductions from the mainland and the south. Take, for example, Arran, where the deer are, and have been for the past twenty years, better than in any place on the mainland of Scotland. It is now called a deer forest, and the deer are just as difficult to kill as those in the Highlands, but as a matter of fact they are restrained within certain limits, and the ground was not really afforested till February 1859, when Captain Robert Sandeman took fourteen hinds and six young stags from Knowsley Park and turned them loose near Brodick Castle. Arran heads are now classed as wild, but properly speaking they are park-forest heads. I have seen many of their grand trophies in the hands of M'Culloch in Glasgow, and they are undoubtedly finer than any mainland heads.

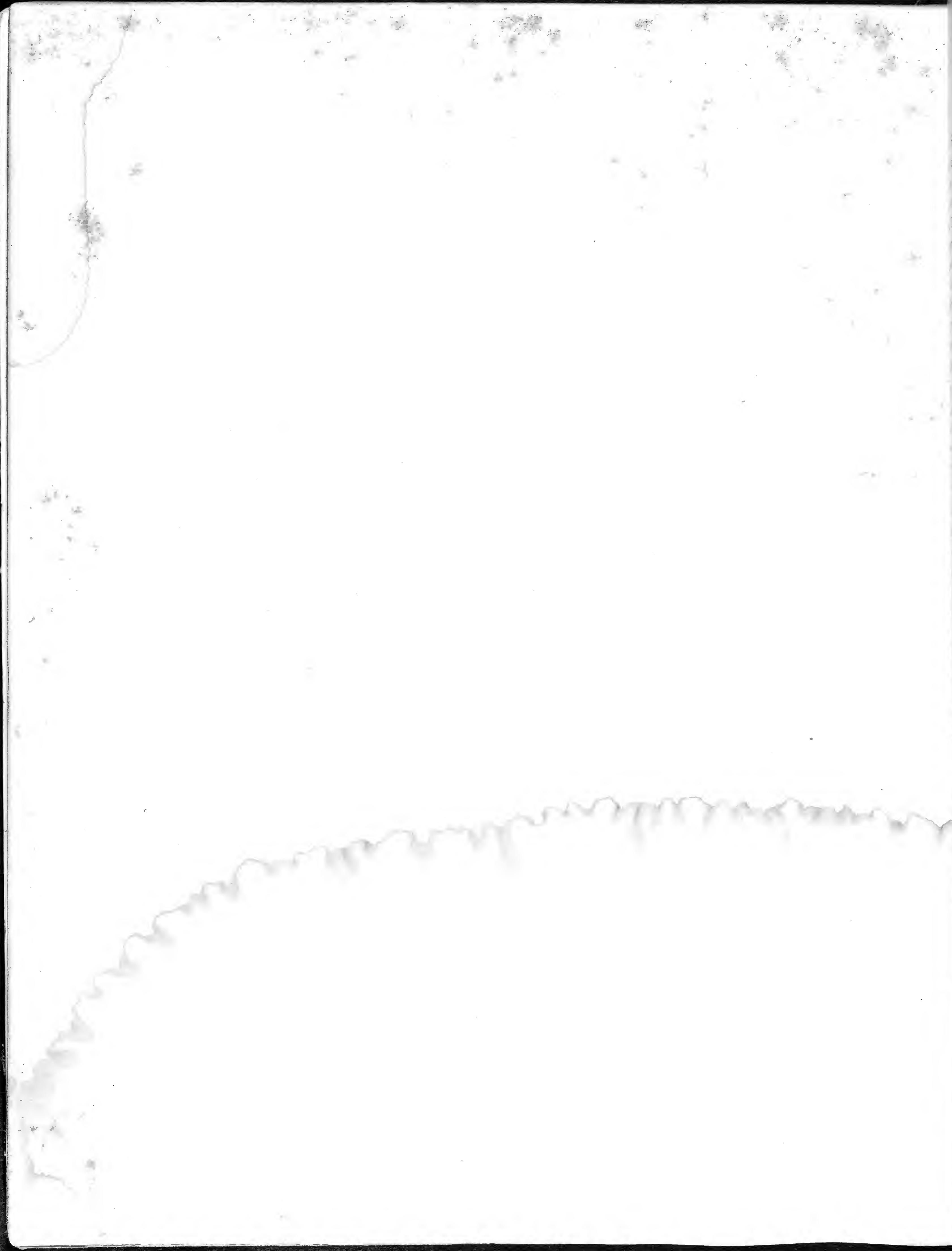
The best Arran head that has been killed was shot by Mr. Padwick in September 1872. The stag weighed 28 stone 6 lbs. clean. Length of horn 42 inches, and span inside 40 inches. The brows are of extraordinary length—22 inches. It now hangs in Brodick Castle.

4, 5. WILD STAGS' HEADS

English.—Judging by the beautiful heads that are to be seen in many old English houses, notably in the northern counties, those deer must have been very much finer from the sixteenth till the eighteenth centuries than they are at the present day, though of course not approaching the German giants of the same period. Living, as they did, so much in great woodlands, the



Sunshine on Ben Alder



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horns, though great of beam, are seldom of that good span which most will agree adds so much dignity to a head. Nowadays, through their isolation and consequent deterioration, the few wild English deer that are left have no better beam than those of the Highlands. They rarely carry more than 12 points and are seldom of very good shape; in fact, the heads of the Devon and Somerset stags do not present any of those marked characteristics shown by Scotch and Irish deer, though the quality of the horn, as in all wild deer, is both rough and good.

Castle Hill, Baronsdown, Holnicote, and Worth all have fine collections of old southern English heads; and Collyns gives a sketch of a remarkable wild stag's head (see p. 111) which was long known as the "Badgeworthy deer," and was killed on 8th September 1786. It carried 21 points. The modern Westmoreland heads are in no way remarkable, and with regard to the New Forest red deer Mr. Gerald Lascelles writes—

The red deer heads that are in this house (Queen's House, Lyndhurst) are only the cast-offs of a finer collection which was taken away in 1849, and they are of no size and not fair specimens of what the stags of the forest may have originally been, but I believe they were never of great size. I have no good head of a stag killed in modern times. If such a thing there be (and I do not recollect one), Mr. Lovell may have it; but the modern red deer are *not legitimately forest deer at all, but spurious altogether*, and should not be reckoned in speaking of forest deer proper.

Irish Red Deer Heads.—Till recently deer were found in a wild state in the less inhabited parts of Connaught, Connemara, and northern Cork. Now, as is well known, they owe their preservation to the Herberts of Muckcross and the Earls of Kenmare. In the two forests by the lovely lakes of Killarney the red deer are finer both in body and head than those of any Scotch forest. Lord Castletown kindly sends me a fine series of photographs of heads killed in Killarney by Lord Castlerosse. The tendency of most adult Irish heads seems to be to run to 14 points, rarely making the cup, but the top dividing into two branches, on each of which are two strong points. The average length of five good heads from Killarney is 32 inches, and royals and 14-pointers are, on an average, much more numerous than in Scotland.

Mr. Ralph Sneyd, who had Muckcross from 1893 till 1895, is good enough to send me particulars of a remarkable stag which he killed in that forest in 1894. The deer weighed 29 stone 10 lbs. clean, and had a remarkably fine head of 14 points. I give an illustration of it, together with a typical Killarney head, on pp. 112, 113.

Lord Powerscourt tells me that the best head and heaviest weight of any stag killed at Muckcross were those of a beast shot by the late Mr. Herbert. It is said to have scaled 30 stone clean, but a recent tenant of the forest tells me that the weight of this animal is fixed by hearsay, and that till within a few years ago no particular care was taken to insure accuracy in weight. Another stag is *said* to have even reached nearly 33 stone in this forest. There are two very fine Muckcross heads at White's Club, St. James' Street.

6. WILD SCOTCH STAGS' HEADS

It is the fashion in these days, when sport of nearly every description is so much overdone, for every one to express an opinion, whether worth listening to or not, in order to keep

on the boil the mass of periodical literature. A favourite habit of these self-constituted critics is to cram down our throats the supreme joys and qualities of the chase and its surround-

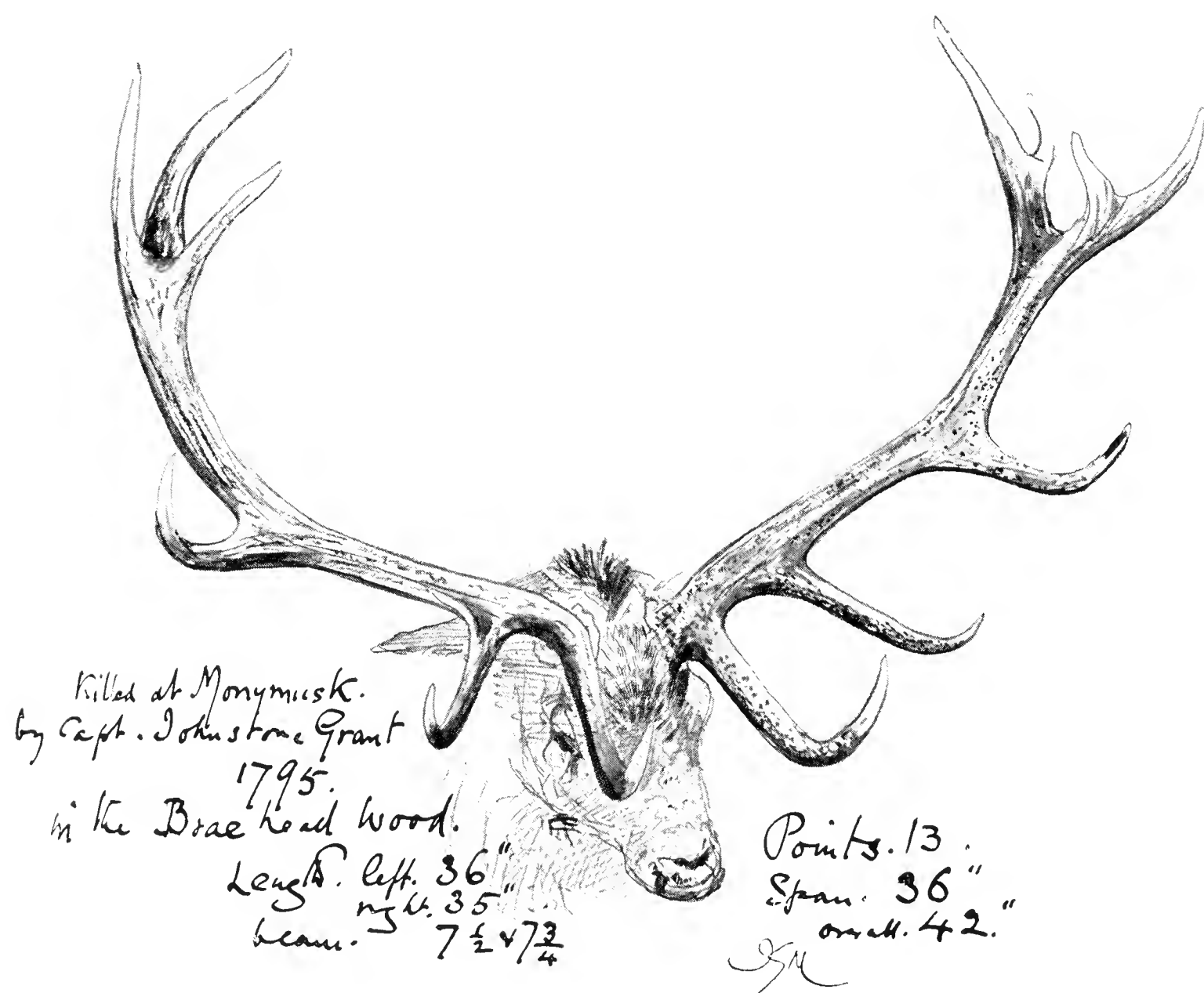


The upper figure shows a good royal of the present day, which, however, does not compare very favourably with the grand specimen beneath it.
The latter, a 15-pointer, is an ideal Scotch head of fifty years ago.

ings as it existed fifty years ago, to the deprecation of the modern methods. "Everything," one will say, "relating to sport has deteriorated. Look at Scotch stags' heads, for instance; what are they now? Hardly worth hanging on one's walls as trophies."



TWO VIEWS OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY FINE 16-Pointer NOW IN GLENMORISTON HOUSE
Killed in Glenmoriston Wood sixty years ago by Colonel J. Grant of Moy.



Now what has been the experience of one of these? He has perhaps seen one or two Highland forests where the deer *were* miserably poor, listened to after-dinner chatter, and simply followed the voice of the flying day in such matters. Had he listened a little less and seen a little more, I think his opinion would not have been quite so hastily formed.

The late Mr. William Macleay of Inverness, a Highlander of broad mind and excellent judgment, through whose hands, for over thirty years, the cream of the Scotch heads had passed, used to laugh at such critics and say, "Why, if they only saw the rubbish that used to come into my hands when I first started business here, it might open their eyes. About *once*, or *twice*, in a season we used to get a 'clinker,' certainly as good, and better than the best nowadays. But as for the *average* being better than to-day, it is perfect nonsense."

I think that the reason of so much talk about the deterioration of Scotch heads has its origin in the gun-rooms of those forests where really good heads *were* occasionally obtained, and where they are now no more. From neglect, overstocking, or fencing in where there is no shelter, owners have in many cases ensured quantity at the expense of quality. Thirty years ago the stretch of forests ranging from Inchbae and Wyvis to Rhidorroch was famous for its heads; to-day there is an enormous quantity of deer there, but season after season hardly any respectable heads are obtained in the whole district. Many other tracts of country could be named, and in all such forests where the heads have suffered, stalkers *will* talk and make assertions that their case is that of all. But fortunately there are, on the other hand, many forests where, by judicious treatment, the heads have not suffered, and in some cases are immeasurably superior to what they used to be, whilst on the newly-cleared sheep grounds heads are always good.

During a lifetime, more than half of which has been spent in the Highlands, I have at different times visited almost every important collection of stags' heads in Scotland. In addition to this, during the last ten years I have seen (sometimes once or twice in a season) the whole of the heads that have passed through the hands of Messrs. Macleay and Snowie of Inverness, Mr. P. D. Malloch of Perth, and Messrs. Small and Hope of Edinburgh, and the London taxidermists. The one question which suggests itself to me with regard to all these vaunted heads of olden days is—if they ever existed in any numbers, where on earth can they have all gone to? Just here and there I have, in some Highland castle, come across a wonderful head killed at the beginning or middle of this century which certainly *is* better than those of to-day; but I could count them all on my fingers, and I am not one of those that believe that on the whole Highland heads have deteriorated much or are deteriorating where common sense is used and due precautions are taken. These are the days of the new forests, and they produce the good heads. Many of the oldest and once famous grounds are worn out and over-stocked.

Individual heads are not what they used to be, and perhaps, taking Scotland all over, the average is not nearly so good in either beam or points; but to-day I maintain that a far greater proportion of first-class heads pass into the stuffer's hands than ever did in former times, but then this is to a great extent accounted for by the very large number of beasts killed.

Every object of art or nature is good or bad by comparison. What a wee Lewis Royal is to a big-headed park stag, so is the latter to the *real* monarch that lived in our peninsula in Pleistocene times. The deterioration of the red stag has practically been going on ever since

those days, and columns of print have been written, and will continue to be written, about how we may improve our deer ; the joke of it all is that every scientist, practical stalker, and naturalist knows how it may be done, but also knows that the self-interest of man *will not allow any such thing to take place*. If proper measures were taken to ensure a return of the vanished monarchs, deer-stalking could then only be indulged in by one or two people, and that would never do. Everybody nowadays wants to have the very largest deer and the greatest possible quantity of them for himself and his friends to shoot ; and to cap all comes the fatal yearly tenant system, for a sportsman paying a big rent very naturally skins the place and spoils the forest as regards the heads. Perhaps, though, things are best, after all, as they are, for the two main objects of Highland deer-stalking are, first, the grand sport and manly recreation it affords to the well-to-do classes in Great Britain ; and, secondly, the congenial employment it gives to the people of the soil. Without a very great stock of deer such a condition of things could not exist. Heads must therefore be only a minor consideration ; but all should remember that, as the conditions of wild-deer life have altered so vastly within the past thirty years, it is a most suicidal and absolutely cruel policy to maintain a large stock without very generous winter feeding. If every proprietor were to feed his deer in winter as lavishly as a certain tenant in the west of Scotland does, and were to plant woods in his barren glens, we should not hear half so much about the deterioration of heads, nor would any sportsman find that the stags were one whit easier to shoot when the stalking season arrived.

We have in the red deer of New Zealand a splendid example of the manner in which the animals may be improved in a very short time by the conditions which are most essential to body and horn growth. They were only introduced into the North Island so late as 1850, when some were turned out on the Nelson Hills. These were augmented shortly afterwards by others sent by command of H.R.H. the Prince Consort. Almost immediately the animals increased and multiplied, but owing to the damage they did to cultivation, they were driven back into a wild mountainous country about half the size of Scotland.

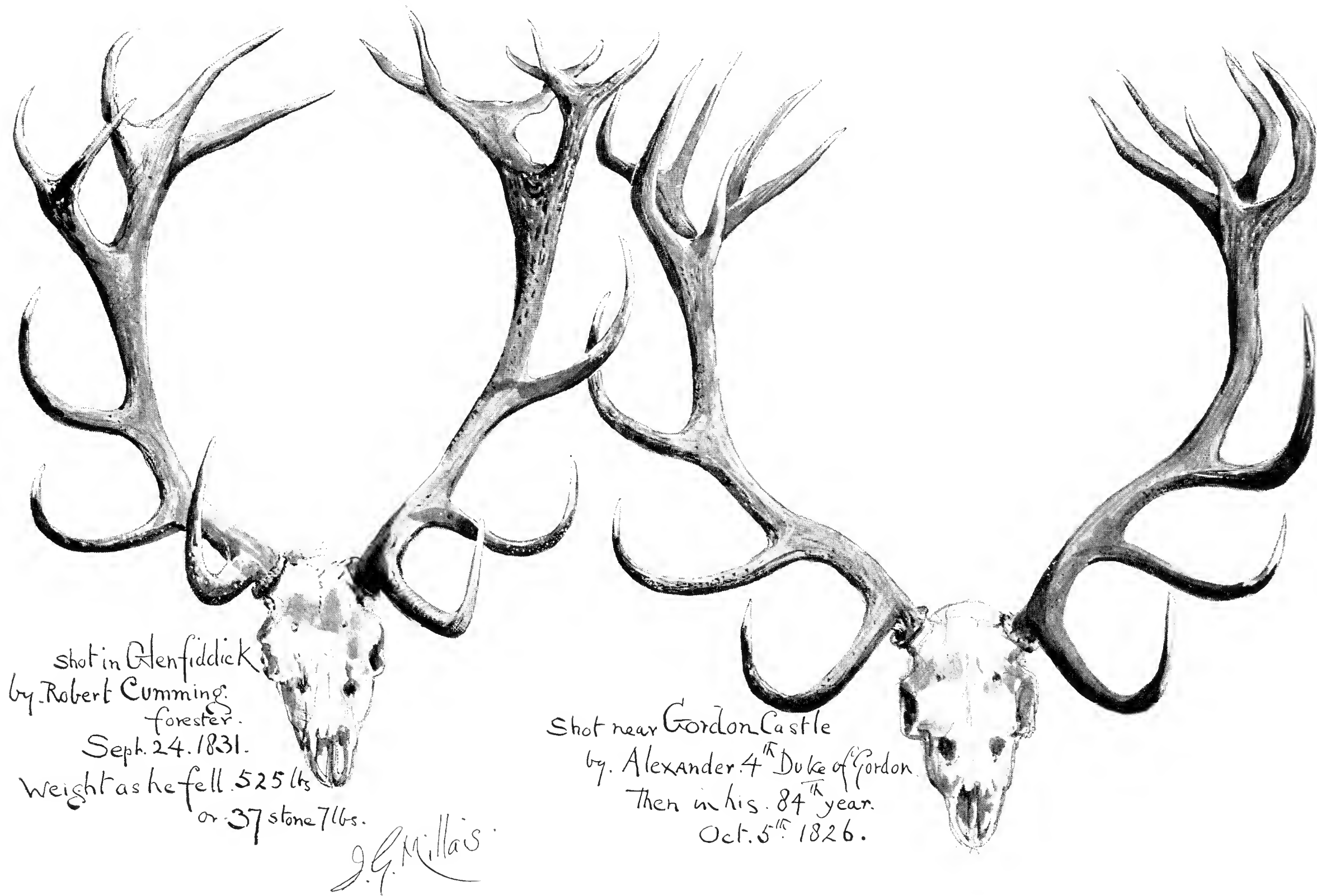
The deer are now fairly numerous near the Maungaraki range, Wairarapa, and Cromwell districts. Stags run to as much as 28 stone clean, and after six years of age carry heads of great size, of which the 18-pointer from Wairarapa owned by Mr. J. Handyside is a good example.

My uncle, Mr. Melville Gray of Timaru, who has spent his life in New Zealand, stalks these wild deer annually in the Cromwell district, and gives a capital account of the sport. The stalking is apparently of a far more arduous nature than that of our Highlands, for the shooter, after he has spied his deer, has sometimes to make a climb of several thousand feet before he can get above them. Even then the ground above the scrub, to which the deer resort in the rutting season, is covered with loose stones, which are set in motion very easily and spoil many a stalk. Two good heads in a fortnight's stalking are considered a fair result on the higher ranges ; most of the deer, however, are killed by still-hunting in the scrub.

The case of the wild Scotch stags which lived from the beginning of this century till 1840 is almost parallel to that of the deer existing in New Zealand to-day. They had a really good range, splendid browsing and grazing, and few other deer to interfere with them ;

their lives were mostly spent in the great woods, from which they only emerged occasionally to spoil some crofter's crop, or wander in search of hinds. There cannot have been any great stock of deer, excepting in a few forests like Mar and Athole, and they could move from one side of Scotland to the other if they chose.

Just here and there in Highland houses one comes across a genuine head of one of these Highland monarchs. Sir Arthur Grant of Monymusk has a beautiful head of one of these wood stags, killed on that estate in 1795 by Captain Johnstone Grant (figured p. 121).



There is a fine head in Glenmoriston (see p. 121), killed by Colonel Grant of Moy, near the house in 1850 (figured), for photographs of which I am indebted to Mr. Alex. Dennistoun and J. Grant of Glenmoriston.¹ The Marquis of Huntly also kindly sends me the photograph and measurements of a forest stag's head with 15 points killed by Charles, tenth Marquis of Huntly, in Glen Tanar, 1858, as well as that of a Royal recently shot by himself in the same forest (figured p. 120). Certainly the two best heads of this period that I have seen are two examples hanging in the library at Gordon Castle. They are quite perfect in every way, and it is not too much to say that they are in no way inferior to the very best dug-up Irish heads (recent), besides being somewhat longer. The first of these magnificent heads, a 17-

¹ There is another beautiful 15-pointer in Glenmoriston House, killed on the estate about the same period. It is but little inferior to the one figured, and has a wider span.

pointer, was killed in Glenfiddick by Robert Cumming (forester) on 24th September 1831. The second—also a 17-pointer—was killed by Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon, when in his eighty-fourth year, in the woods near Gordon Castle, on 5th October 1826. It is the best all-round Scotch stag's head I have ever seen. I am unfortunately unable to give the measurements of these two exceptional heads, but the length of the one killed in Glenfiddick is, I should guess, about 40 inches, and the other about 37 inches. No two such heads as these could ever be found now, alas! in any of our Northern forests, for they are quite in a class above even extraordinary heads.

One very noticeable feature with regard to the Scotch stags' heads of to-day is the curious way in which the tops of the heads have altered. Heads with "cups" are now becoming quite rare, for the horns now generally throw out their three points on the top in irregular forms. Another slight change, too, is that adult stags seldom have the "bays" so well developed as formerly, and in a very large number of good heads these points are now absent. The number of points generally found on Scotch heads is well shown in Mr. Macleay's table of those which passed through his hands from 1889-1895.

Season.	No. of Points.													Switch.	One Horn.	Hummel.	Malform.	Under Six Points.
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	20					
1889	40	35	83	65	87	55	54	15	5	1	...	...	...	2	2	...	4	51
1890	57	37	90	64	94	49	32	6	2	...	...	1	...	16	3	...	1	46
1891	49	32	91	69	111	38	45	4	1	1	...	...	...	2	...	2	1	54
1892	56	44	87	72	100	46	49	6	4	1	...	...	...	10	2	1	1	21
1893	33	23	79	62	97	70	71	13	2	2	1	...	1	11	1	3	7	24
1894	38	43	97	64	102	54	38	8	5	1	1	...	...	12	...	6	7	24
1895	49	38	75	69	114	55	50	6	4	2	1	...	...	21	1	4	5	6

Though no criterion of excellence in heads, it is interesting to note the seasonal fluctuations. It is a very good Scotch stag's head that exceeds 32 inches in length, 32 inches' span (inside), and whose points are all properly developed; though, as we all know, measurements are no absolute criterion of intrinsic excellence, the very best heads will always be found to measure well. After careful consideration I have decided to separate the best recently-killed Scotch stags' heads into two classes. First, those which we may call "Extraordinary," in that they present remarkable features both in measurement and beauty, and which stand in superiority like giants on a plane apart; and, secondly, what may be termed "First-class Heads." Now in many seasons there may not be such a thing as an extraordinary head obtained, whilst, as a rule, not more than one or two first-class heads are laid low.

EXTRAORDINARY HEADS

The following list, without pretending to be a complete one, gives most of the really famous heads which have been obtained since the year 1840.



A HEAD OF REMARKABLE SHAPE, BEAM, AND LENGTH

Killed by the first Lord Tweedmouth at Guisachan, Ross-shire, 9th October 1880. Span over all, $39\frac{1}{4}$ in.; length (R), 39 in.; circumference between brow and bay, $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.; weight, 21 stone 9 lbs. clean.

Stags' Heads

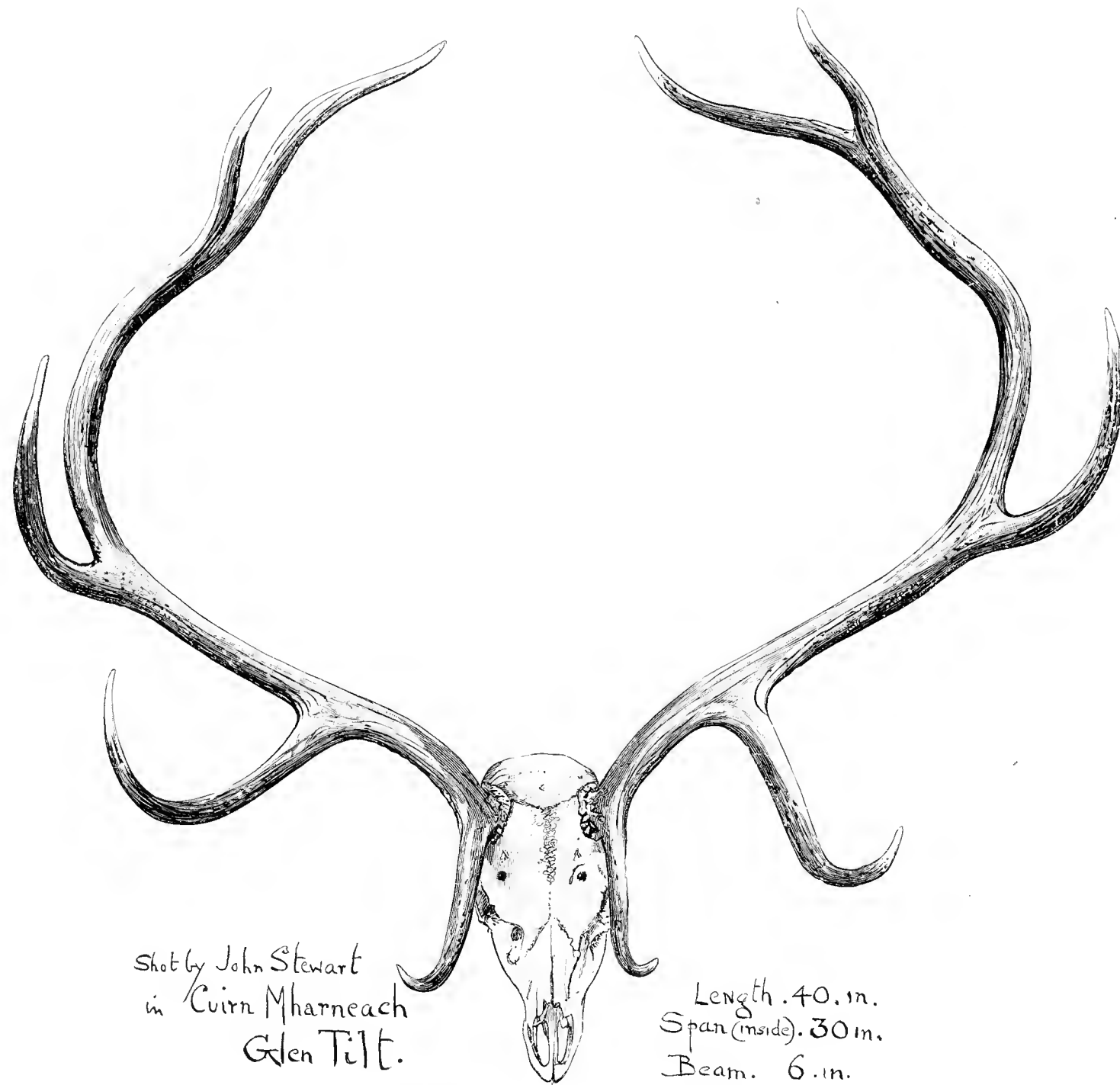
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1. A head killed by the first Lord Tweedmouth on 9th October 1880 at Guisachan, Ross-shire. The full measurements are as follows :—

Widest span over all, $39\frac{1}{4}$; span inside below cups, 34; span outside below cups, 37.

Right Horn

Length, 39; length of brow, $10\frac{1}{4}$; length of bay, 10; tray, 13; length of tines in cup, 10, 7, $4\frac{1}{4}$.
Circumference at coronet, $8\frac{1}{2}$; circumference between brow and bay, $7\frac{1}{4}$; above tray, 6.



Shot by John Stewart
in Cuirn Mharneach
Glen Tilt.

Owner, The Duke of Atholl
Weight, 14 st. 7 lbs.

Length, 40 in.
Span (inside), 30 in.
Beam, 6 in.
Points, 10.

J. M. 1895.

A HEAD OF REMARKABLE BEAM AND LENGTH

Left Horn

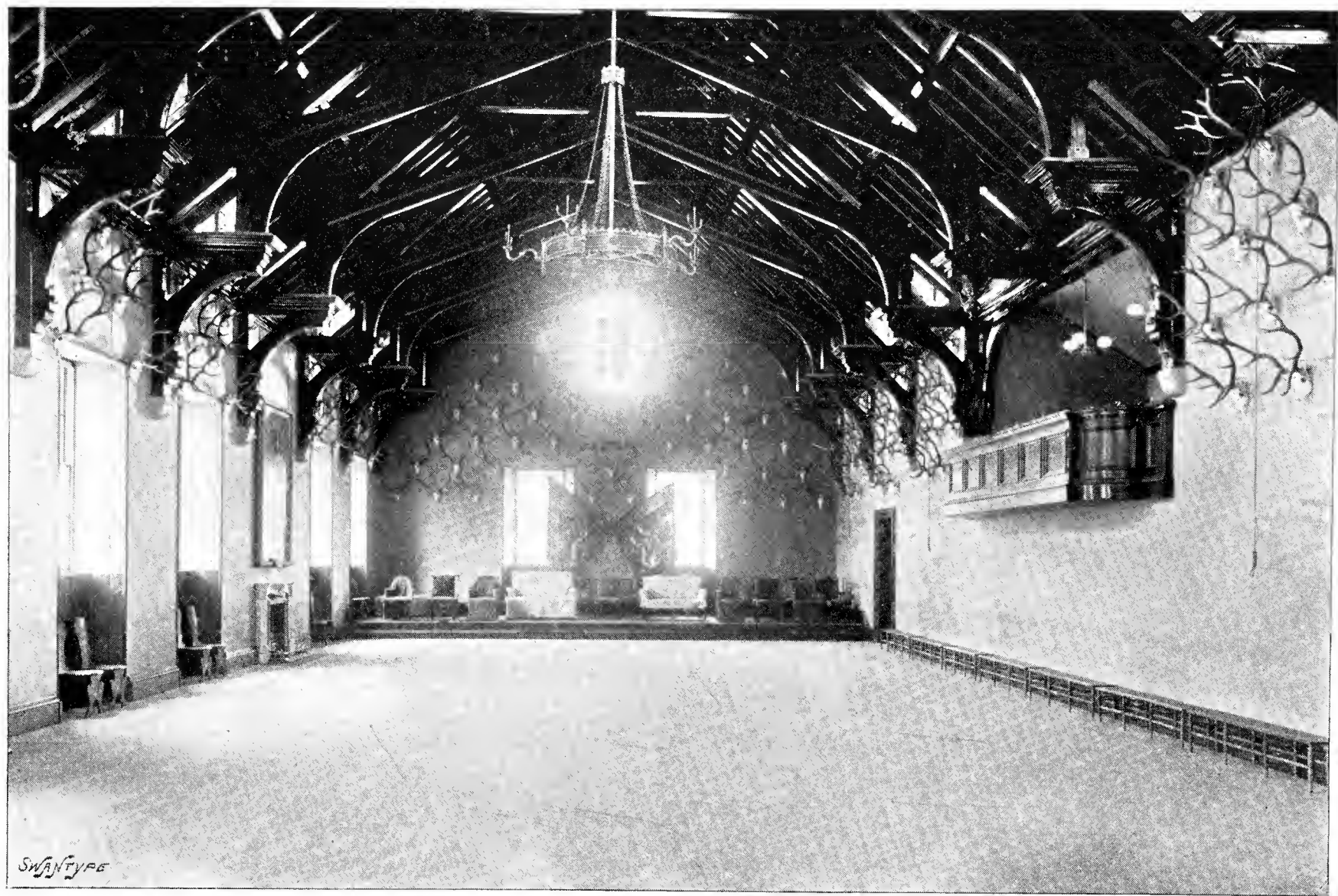
Length, 38; brow, 10; bay, 8; tray, 11; length of tines in cup, 8, 6, 4.

Circumference at coronet, 9; between brow and bay, $7\frac{1}{2}$; above tray, $6\frac{1}{4}$.

Weight of Stag, 21 stone 9 lbs., but it was much run when shot.

This head is as remarkable for its weight, roughness, colour, and symmetry as for its great length and width, and is not, I think, excelled by any recently-killed specimen in Scotch collections. The following is its genuine history, as gathered from what I believe to be thoroughly authentic sources. The Beaufort stalkers maintain that the deer was born on that estate. Certainly there is not the least doubt that it "summered" and spent much

of its time during the first ten years of its life in the big woods of Boblainey, Farley, and Eskadale, ranging at times as far west as Glenmoriston, and working out to the open ground of Guisachan in the rutting season, where it was several times seen. Such a stag was not likely to escape the notice of the vigilant foresters of the district, for they all knew him, and after he became Royal many a glass searched for him. I have reason to believe that he spent the summer of 1880 in the Guisachan woods, from which he would emerge in the evening and have a good time in the small corn-fields of Strath Glass; but his sins in this direction became regarded almost as virtues by Lord Tweedmouth, who hoped to make his closer acquaintance later in the season. However, much to the chagrin of the Guisachan people,



THE BALL-ROOM, BLAIR CASTLE

he disappeared from there, causing, on the other hand, exceeding joy in the heart of Johnny Ross (the Beaufort stalker), for had he not spotted him quietly feeding in one of his former favourite glades in Boblainey Wood? Johnny, of course, informed his master, the late Lord Lovat, at once; but Boblainey is a difficult wood to get a stag in, early in the season, so it was not until the 7th of October that the stalker both heard and saw the big stag roaring, and brought his master to the spot. Strange to say, Lord Lovat, who was one of the finest shots of his day, obtained an easy chance at him and, for some reason or other, missed clean. The stag bounded away, and was seen the same evening galloping as hard as his legs would carry him over the Eskadale march. Two days later Duncan MacLennan rushed into the house at Guisachan at mid-day and told Lord Tweedmouth that he had found the big stag with some hinds on the hill outside Farmer's Wood. Hastily mounting the ponies, Lord Tweedmouth and his stalker were soon on the road, re-found the stag, at which an easy chance was obtained, and killed him.

There is a good collection of heads at Guisachan,¹ amongst which is one of the three pairs of engraved antlers known to collectors. The horns, which measure some 40 inches and carry 13 points, are polished white and engraved in fantastic designs, mostly representing sporting scenes in European countries. Mr. Baillie-Grohman, in describing the other two pairs in existence, one of which he is fortunate enough to possess, says that Baron Nath. Rothschild of Vienna owns the third pair, for which he paid £600—probably the highest price given in modern times for a deer's head.

2. In Blair Castle there hangs in a place of honour at the end of one of the long passages a beautiful head of 10 points, exceptional beam, and extraordinary length. This stag



ONE OF THE PASSAGES, BLAIR CASTLE
With a large collection of stags' heads shot by the present Duke of Athole.

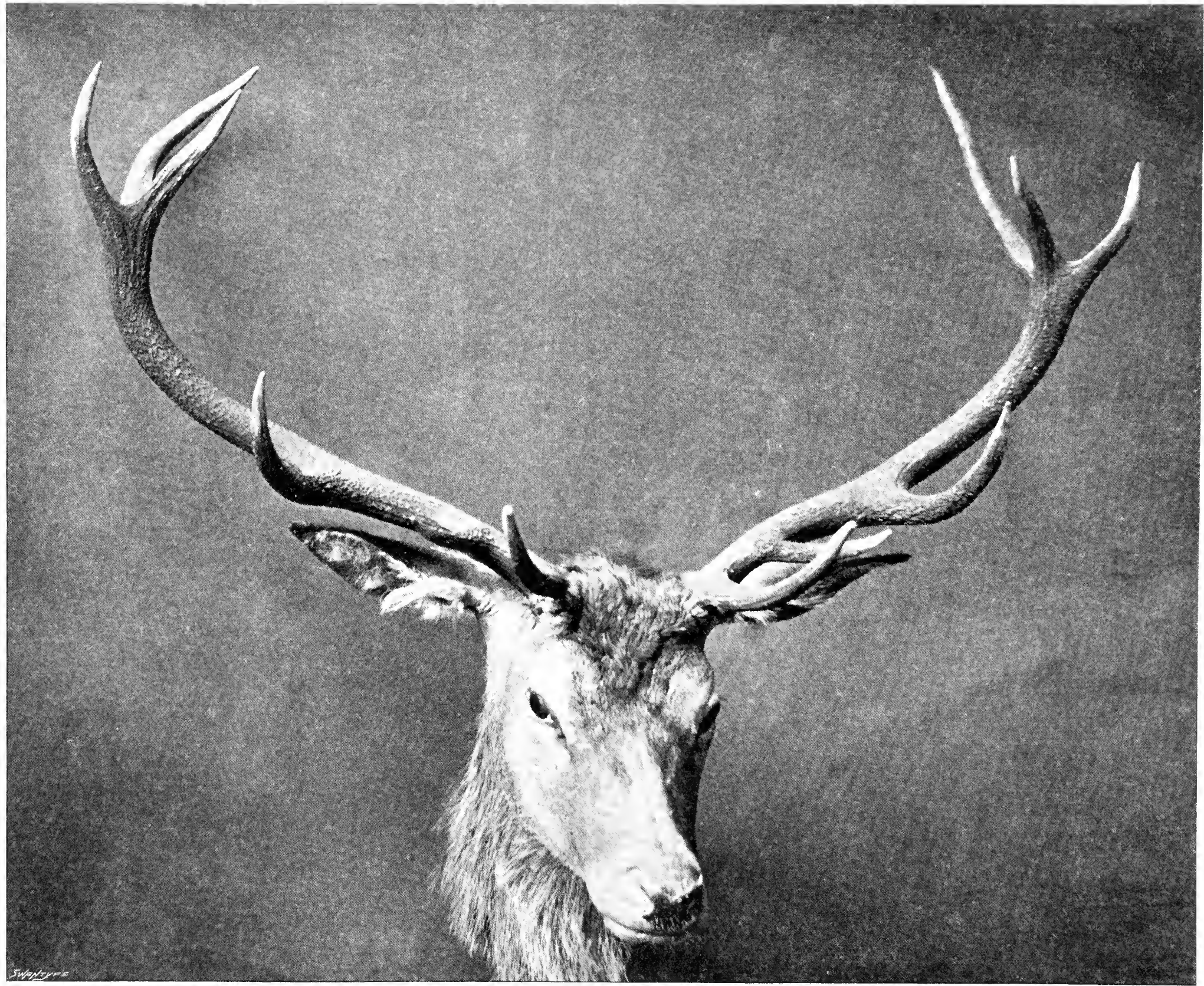
frequented one of the corries known as Cuirn Mharneach for several years. At last he grew such an unusually fine head that orders were given for him to be shot, as he was not obtainable during the stalking season. This was effected by a stalker named John Stewart, known in the forest as "Black Jock."

Blair Castle contains, I think, about the largest and best collection of stags' heads in Scotland.² Though deer-stalking has been conducted in the forest for a longer period probably than in any other, yet, comparatively speaking, there are no old heads, nearly

¹ A very fine 15-pointer was killed this last season (1896) in Guisachan by Hon. Dudley Marjoribanks. This head, with two Royals sent by Lord Burton from Glenquoich, and a beautiful 14-pointer killed by my friend Mr. Charles Lucas at Dundreggan, were the best heads of a good season.

² Gordon Castle collection is quite as interesting as that of Blair Castle, though it is perhaps not so large.

all the trophies dating from within the last fifty years. The average of Blair heads is very good, and remarkably so as no introductions have taken place there. One marked feature of the heads, in contrast to more northern heads, is the constancy of the "bay" tines, which are nearly always well developed. In the ball-room are the pick of the heads, amongst



SHOT BY COLONEL HOLMES IN BRAEMORE FOREST, ROSS-SHIRE, 1868
In possession of Sir John Fowler. A head of remarkable shape.

which are many grand examples of what Highland heads should really be ; but I doubt if there is one superior to the example figured (see p. 127).

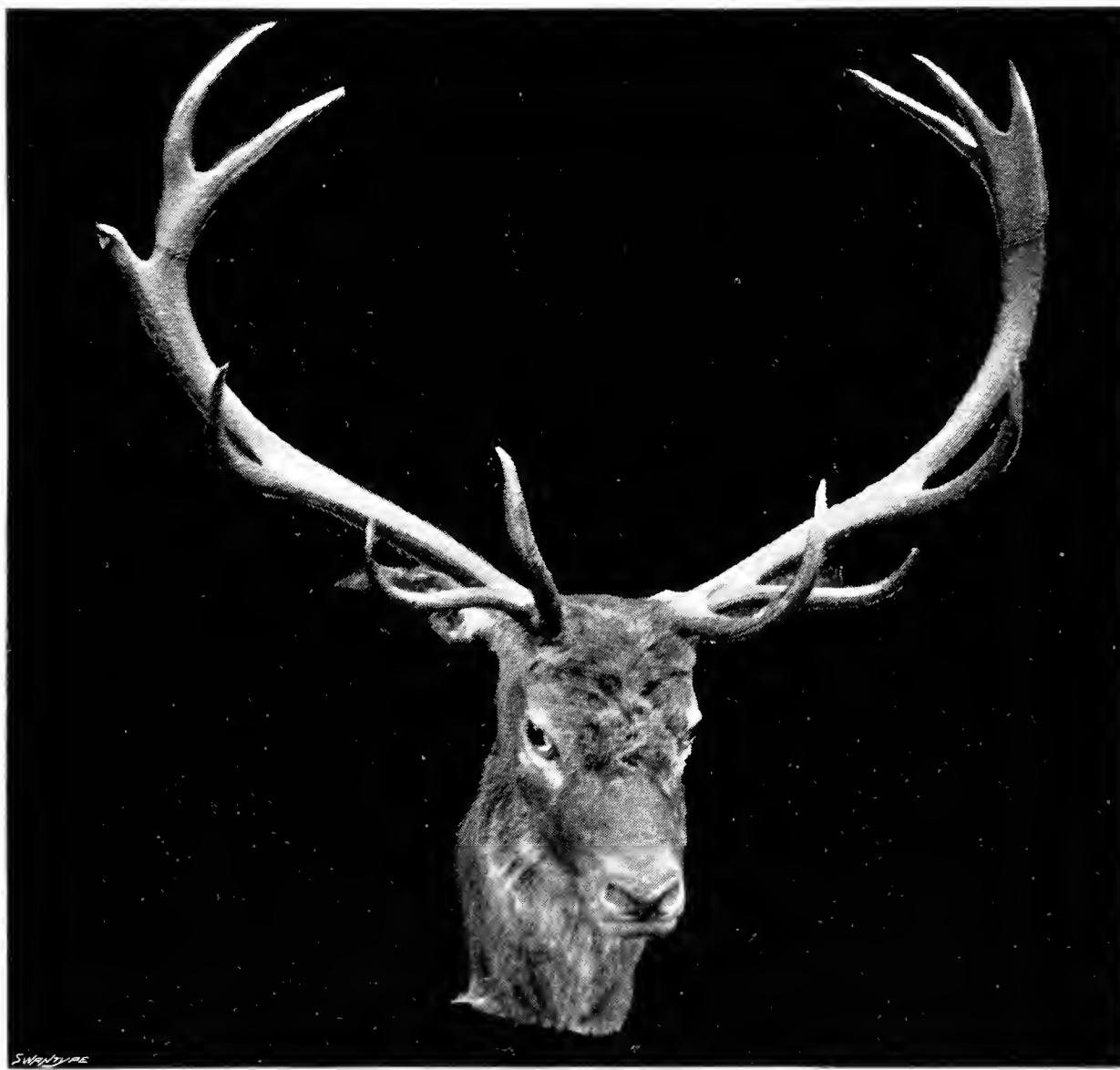
3. Braemore, Sir John Fowler's beautiful home in Ross-shire, boasts, among a fair collection, a head which is probably better known than any other in the North. It is that of a stag which was famous at one time in the district for having been so frequently stalked in vain, till he eventually fell to the rifle of Colonel Holmes, Sir John's brother-in-law. Its symmetry is almost ideal, its beam good, and span (though I have not the measurements) quite exceptional. In one feature alone does it slightly fall away—the brows not being particularly good and the "bays" being weak. There is little doubt that this grand stag had just passed its prime (see above).

4. The remarkable stag killed at Eskdale in August 1892 I look upon as an old friend, for I was within 40 yards of him twice—first in 1890, and again in 1891. Mr. Heath was then the tenant at Eskdale, and most kindly used to let me go each year to stalk a roebuck on his ground. On the second occasion Hugh Ross (the Eskdale stalker) and I were creeping along the hill-side soon after dawn. I was in front for the moment, and saw a



A HEAD OF GREAT BEAM AND ROUGHNESS
Shot at Eskdale, 1892.

small birch, some 40 yards below me, agitating violently. We of course immediately collapsed on the ground, and had no sooner done so than out walked the big Eskdale stag. Mr. Heath was most anxious to shoot him, I knew, and I had no leave to do so, so there was nothing for it but to put up my rifle and see where one would *like* to hit him and then—take it down again. This stag, as soon as his horns were clean, moved into Beaufort for the autumn, and Mr. Heath, whose last year it was, never obtained a shot. From one's own selfish point of view the cruel part of the affair was that, when Ross told his master how near we had been and what a chance we had had on the second occasion, the latter said, "What a thousand pities he didn't shoot him!" And they say there is no such thing as luck!



Killed by a poacher in Glenmoriston, formerly in the collection of Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming, and now owned by Colonel Gordon-Cumming, Forres.
Points, 12 ; length, $36\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; extreme span, 35 in. ; brow points, $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length.



SHOT BY ROUALEYN GORDON-CUMMING IN GLEN STRATHFARRAR

Now in the possession of Lord Powerscourt. Width inside, $39\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; over all, 41 in. ; length, $35\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; circumference of base, 8 in.
A head of remarkable span.

Next year, 1892, the tenant of Eskdale was Mr. Lawrence Hardy. At the beginning of August a young friend from India, who had never seen a wild stag before, came to stay. He was sent out, as usual, with Hugh Ross at dawn to look for a roebuck along the side of the big wood. They of course ran bang up against the big stag standing at about 50 yards, broadside, in a corn-field. The young sportsman fired and the stag galloped away. When he had gone about 150 yards, Ross suggested that another barrel might be useful. Accord-



LORD BURTON'S 20-POINTER, SHOT AT GLENQUOICH
A head with an unusual number of points. Shot 1893.

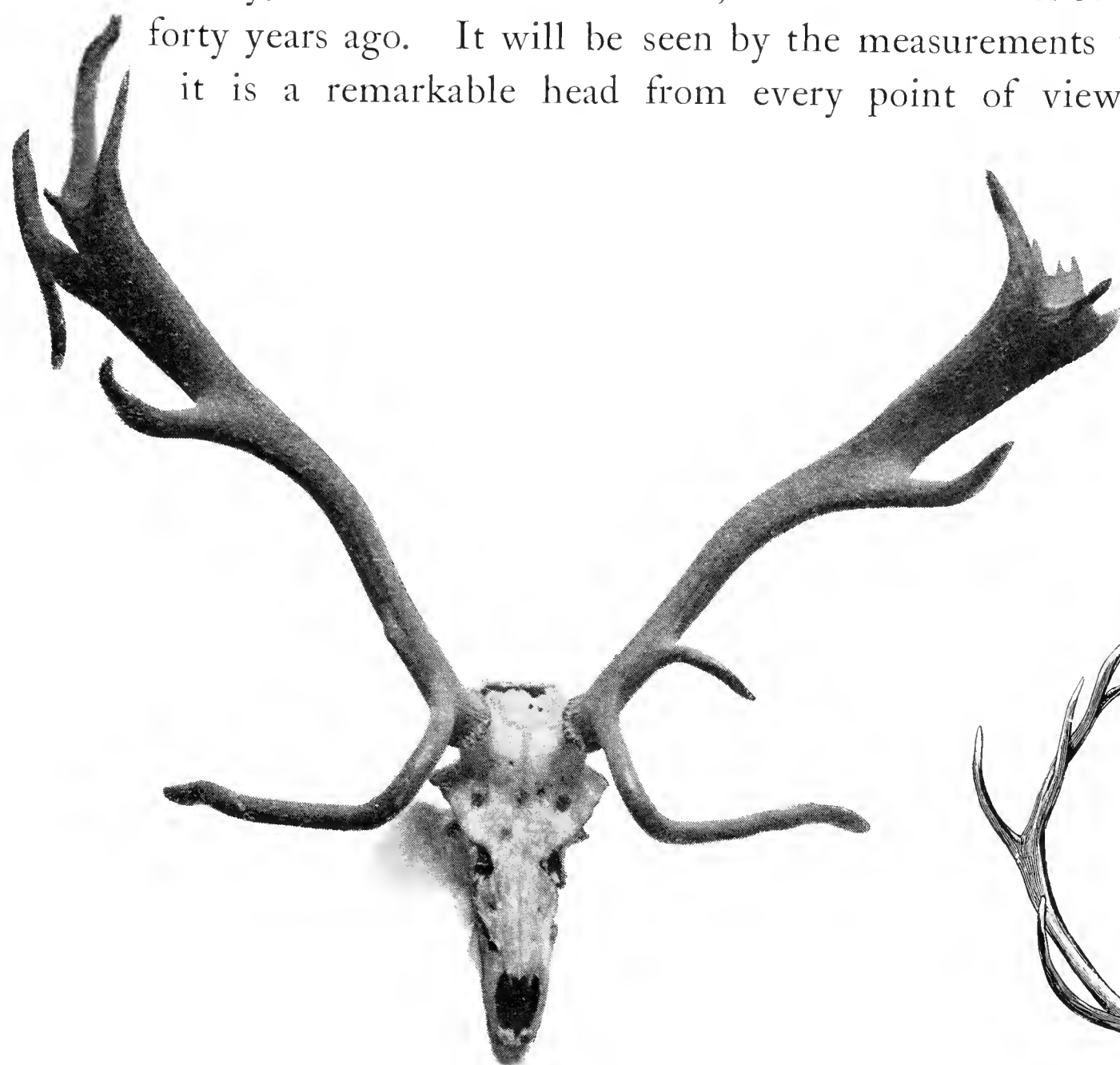
ingly another shot was fired, and down went the Eskdale monarch, with a bullet through the back of his neck.

I have not the measurements of this splendid head, but in this case I did not take them, as they are immaterial. It is a head which of course would measure well, but its great beauty lies in its extraordinary thickness and wonderful roughness. I have never seen a head so rough or so beautifully beaded.

5. Colonel Gordon-Cumming, the author of *Wild Men and Wild Beasts in India*, has in his house at Forres a famous head which formerly belonged to his brother Roualeyn, the South African hunter, who bought it for a large sum from old Snowie in Inverness. Its

history, so far as I can trace it, is that it was killed by a poacher in Glenmoriston about forty years ago. It will be seen by the measurements under the photograph on p. 132 that it is a remarkable head from every point of view, the brow points and form being exceptionally beautiful.

6. At the sale of Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming's effects Lord Powerscourt added this extraordinarily wide head to his collection. Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming admitted that he poached it on Lord Lovat's ground in Glen Strath-



This remarkable head, now in the possession of Lord Powerscourt, was formerly in the collection of the late Hay Mackenzie at Rhidorroch, Ross-shire. He received it from the poacher who killed it in his forest. Points, 19; width, 40 in.; length (R), 32 in.; brow tines, 18 in.; circumference, base, 7 in.

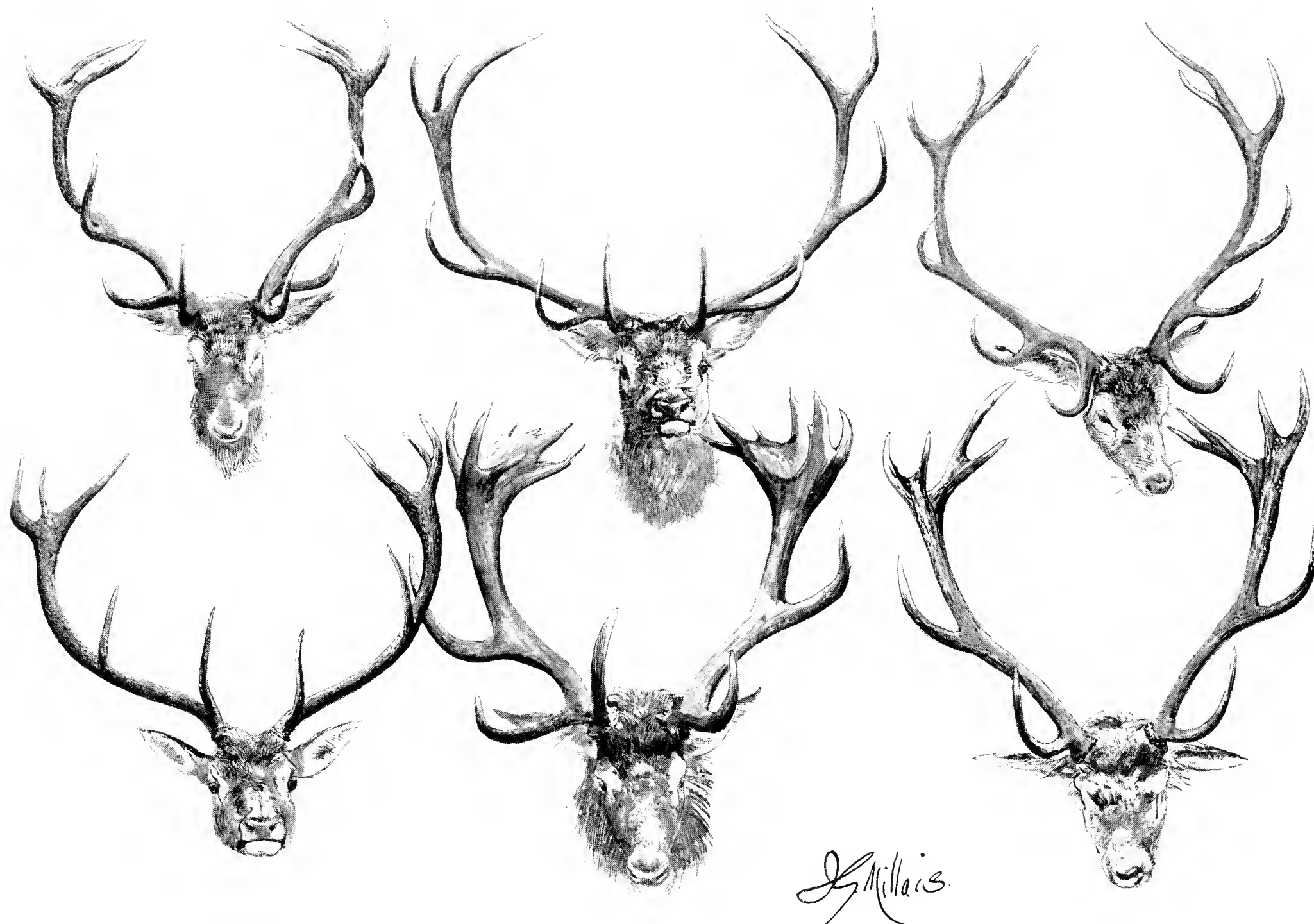
farrar. Just as he killed the deer he saw Lord Lovat's keepers approaching, so he cut off the head and got clear away with it. I do not think that this head should receive quite so much attention as its span would at first lead one to suppose, for on examining it closely one will see that the right horn has had during growth a severe blow, which should, properly speaking, bring it within the list of abnormalities. Even without this defect it would be an extraordinary head (see p. 132).

7. Another remarkable Scotch head in Lord Powerscourt's collection is one carrying 19 points, with a span of 40 inches, and which was killed by a poacher in Rhidorroch some forty years ago. It came into the hands of the owner of the forest, the late Hay Mackenzie, from whom it passed to the fourth Marquis of Londonderry, and from him to his stepson, the present owner.

8. Considering the short time that Lord Burton has been tenant of Glenquoich, he has, with the help of first-rate natural grazing, worked wonders with his deer. Though I have not seen the heads, as they hang in the house, I have, through the courtesy of Messrs. Macleay and Snowie, seen nearly all the good heads killed there during the last few years.



Glenquoich heads are now second to none, and the gem of the collection is said to be the 20-pointer killed by Lord Burton in 1893. Many do not admire this trophy as an example of a wild Scotch head, but then that is merely a matter of taste. That any Highland deer should have been capable of throwing out such a curious form of horn-growth is indeed very remarkable, all the more so as when I examined the horns shortly after death they were not of good quality or solidity. Mr. Grimble, in his *Deer Forests of Scotland*, tells us the circumstances



SOME FIRST-CLASS HEADS

1. Royal, shot by Captain T. W. Gill at North Morar, September 1891. Length, $32\frac{1}{2}$ in.; girth above bay, 6 in.; span inside, 32 in. (R. Ward's measurements).
2. 11-pointer Glenfiddich, shot by the Earl of March, now in the smoking-room, Gordon Castle.
3. Royal, shot by the late Lord Alex. Paget in Corrie Varnie, Auchnashellach, 1871. Weight, 19 stone; length, $35\frac{1}{2}$ in.; girth above bay, 6 in.; span, 29 in.
4. 10-pointer, shot by Sir Edmund Loder, Kintail, 1894. Length, 32 in.; span between cups, 34 in.
5. Killed at Wairarapa, New Zealand, 1891. Owner, Mr. J. Handyside. Length, $36\frac{1}{2}$ in.; girth above bay, $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.; span inside, $32\frac{1}{2}$ in.; points, 18. We see here a good example of the head improvement which has taken place in the offspring of wild Scotch stags introduced into a new country forty-six years ago, where all the conditions of life are favourable to them. This is probably the third generation.
6. Royal, shot by Sir Edmund Loder, Kintail, 1894. Length, $33\frac{1}{2}$ in.; girth above bay, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.; span inside, 27 in.

under which this head was obtained. He states that Lord Burton was proceeding with a party from Glenquoich to Loch Nevis when they suddenly came on a company of stags. Seeing there was no way of getting round them, Lord Burton, who had his rifle with him, tried a long shot, fully 300 yards, at a big stag, and dropped him dead.

These eight heads we may safely place in a class apart, and they are some of the best examples of extraordinary Scotch heads killed within the last forty years. In this category should also be included the two big heads hanging in Beaufort Castle, killed respectively by

the late Lord Lovat and the present owner. In form and quality they closely resemble the big Guisachan and Eskadale heads.

Of other extraordinary examples which I have not seen and examined, the following information is communicated by friends.

Lord Alexander Paget¹ states that there is the head of a stag, killed some forty years ago by Lord Tanquerville in Ardverikie, which has a span (over all) of 42 inches.

Lord Hindlip kindly sends me particulars of the widest head ever killed in Invermark. The stag in question was shot by Lord Wemyss (then Lord Elcho). It has 5 points on the right horn and 4 on the left, well developed, and has the remarkable span (inside) of 39 inches, beam 5 inches, length $33\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

In Mar Lodge for many years a 39-inch-span head held the place of honour, but it has lately given place to another head finer all round, and of 40 inches over the cups.

Lord Iveagh has, I am told, a remarkable head of 16 points, which he killed many years ago in Ardverikie.

FIRST-CLASS HEADS

I come now to first-class heads, in which we may fairly include any head with perfectly-developed points, a length of over 34 inches, and a span inside exceeding 32 or 33 inches. At first the sportsman might suppose that such were numerous, but that is not the case. Many forests cannot show a single head of such dimensions, yet on reviewing collections as a whole the numbers in existence are too great to include in any work except one which would give a complete list of Scotch heads. I have therefore thought it best to give a tabulated list of a few of the best first-class heads recently killed in Scotland.

SOME FIRST-CLASS HEADS

Owner.	Points.	Length.	Span.	Beam above bay.	Remarks.
The Marquis of Breadalbane	13	...	37	...	A beautiful head, but rather spindly, of extraordinary span, shot by the Marchioness of Breadalbane. Now in Black Mount Forest Lodge (figured).
The Duke of Athole	12	$34\frac{1}{2}$	$34\frac{1}{2}$	5	Shot by Lewis Way, Esq., Glen Tilt, October 1876. Weight 16 stone 7 lbs. clean. A very curious head, with almost straight horns, forming a complete equilateral triangle. Now in Blair Castle (figured).
Colonel Gordon-Cumming	11	34	...	...	A stag who knew a thing or two about winter feeding and how to take care of himself. Poached in Braemar. Brow points 13 inches (figured). Now in Forres House.
Sir W. Ogilvie Dalglish	12	34	$36\frac{1}{2}$	$4\frac{3}{4}$	Killed by owner in Glen Bruar Forest, Perthshire (figured). Now in Errol Park.
Lord Alexander Paget	12	$35\frac{1}{2}$	29	6	Weight 19 stone. Killed in Corrie Varnie, Auchnasshellach, September 1871, probably the best head ever killed in that forest. Shot by owner (figured).

¹ Since this was written Lord Alexander Paget has passed away, and his death will be lamented by many who knew him as one of the best stalkers and shots of his day.

Stags' Heads

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SOME FIRST-CLASS HEADS—*continued.*

Owner.	Points.	Length.	Span.	Beam above bay.	Remarks.
Lord Alexander Paget	9	34 $\frac{1}{2}$	33	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	Corrour, 10th October 1892. Shot by owner.
John Hargreaves	9	33	30	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	Killed in Corrie Bhran, Gaick. Shot by the late J. Hargreaves, sen.
" "	8	35	27 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	Killed in Cairn Thomais, Gaick, by owner.
" "	9	33 $\frac{1}{2}$	29 $\frac{5}{8}$	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	Killed Corrie Diarcraig, Gaick, by owner, 1894.
" "	12	...	...	...	A Royal, no measurements taken. Shot by Colonel Rhodes in Gaick, of beautiful shape (figured). These four heads are the best killed in Gaick of recent years, and till lately were at Maiden Erlegh, Berks.
W. Stirling	14	32 $\frac{1}{2}$	26	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Good points, very even head, Monar.
"	11	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	32	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	Monar.
"	10	34	30	4 $\frac{5}{8}$	Monar.
T. W. Gill	10	35	34	...	North Morar.
"	12	32 $\frac{1}{2}$	32	6	
The Earl of Ancaster	12	33	25	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	Shot at Gildermorie, Ross-shire, by owner.
" "	14	34	26	7	Glenartney. Shot by owner. A very thick head.
Sidney Loder	13	30	27	6	Shot in Glen Cannich, 1892. Weight 17 stone 2 lbs.
"	5 (single-horned stag)	33	...	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	Athole Forest, 1890. Weight 17 stone 7 lbs.
"	8	32	30 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	Benula Forest, 1894. Weight 17 stone 10 lbs.

The above, all killed within the last twenty years, include the best examples from several of the best Highland forests, and we see that most houses on well-managed estates have only two or three such heads to show.

Sir George Macpherson Grant at Ballindalloch has three grand heads, which come quite at the top of the first-class standard. Sir E. Loder has three beauties, a 10- (figured), a 12-, and a 14-pointer, killed by himself at Kintail in 1894. In the grand collection at Gordon Castle are several such heads, notably a 10-pointer (figured) and a 14-pointer, both of which were killed by the Earl of March, and hang in the smoking-room. In Balmacraan there is a grand collection, made by the Earls of Seafeld, as also at Dunrobin and Auchnacarry, though I have not seen that formed by the present Lochiel.

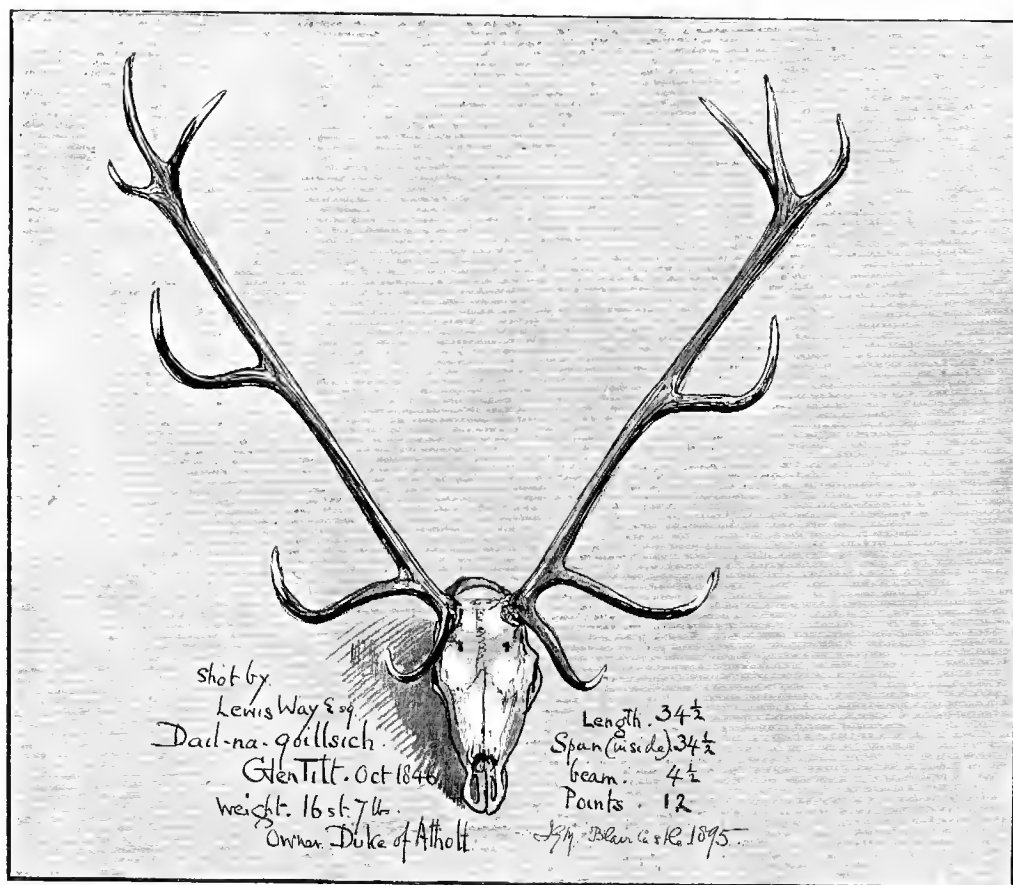
Judging mainly from the heads passing through the hands of the taxidermists, the best of the present day are now coming, for the most part, from the following forests: Athole, Invermark, Drummond Hill, Ben Alder, Gaick, Langwell, Dunrobin (the wood deer), Killilan, Kintail, Guisachan, Glenquoich, Beaufort and Farley, Affaric, Glenfeshie, Brawlen, Coignafearn, Struy, Lochrosque, Morar, Monar, and Mar.¹

Curiosities of horn-growth where the stag, owing to injury during the growth of the horn, throws out points or branches in any direction are now so common and (if one may use such a paradox) so regular in their irregularity, that all sportsmen know what they are like. They are never beautiful, and it is very seldom that they are interesting. There are the "Cromie" heads of Jura, which seem to occur, according to Mr. Henry Evans's account,

¹ The season that has just closed has certainly been a good one, and Mr. William Macleay, in a note (1st November) in which he states that there has been no head killed which excels, says that the best heads of the year have come from Glen Affaric, Clunie, Glenquoich, Killilan, and Knoydart.

rather frequently, and I have seen two three-horned stags where the third coronet was also existing.

Whilst talking recently with young Mr. Macleay, he gave me particulars of what he



A CURIOUSLY STRAIGHT HEAD, THE HORNS FORMING A COMPLETE EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE

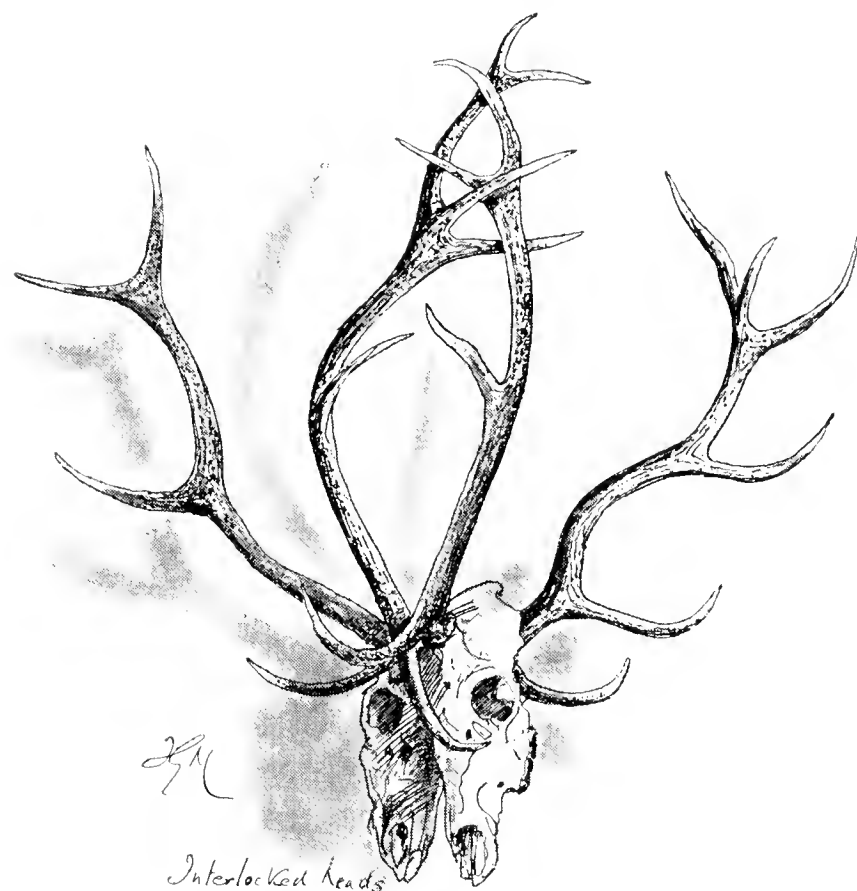
considered one of the most extraordinary abnormalities that had come under his notice. On 15th October 1895 a stag's head with the neck skin attached was sent in to him for preservation by the Countess of Stamford, it having been shot a few days earlier at Nethy



Shot by Colonel Rhodes. In possession of John Hargreaves, Esq.

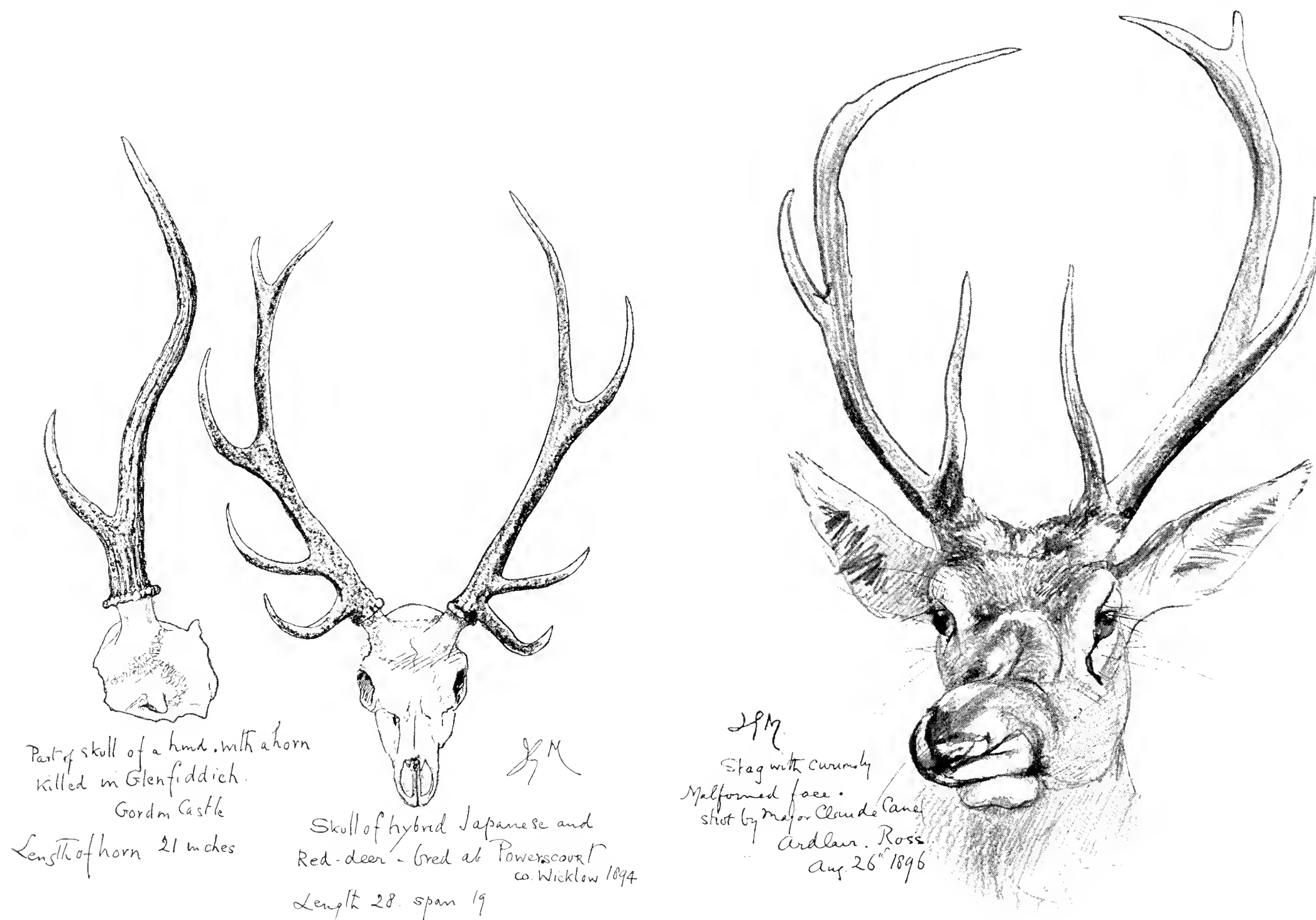
Bridge, Invershin. The remarkable feature of this head was that it was in full-blooded velvet, *though the horn was completely developed and solid*, whilst the hair on the neck was like that of a hind shot late in the season—soft, short, and thick. Now here we have a curious clashing of theories on horn-growth. There is not the least doubt that the stag had been injured in the generative organs during horn-growth, and although the animal assumed

certain external features of the female (as is usual in these cases), yet the horn underneath



Interlocked heads
found together in
Glenfiddich
Gordon Castle collection

the velvet was hard and solid like that of an ordinary stag, and not spongy, light, and porous, as is the case with most perruque beasts. Another curious point about this animal was the



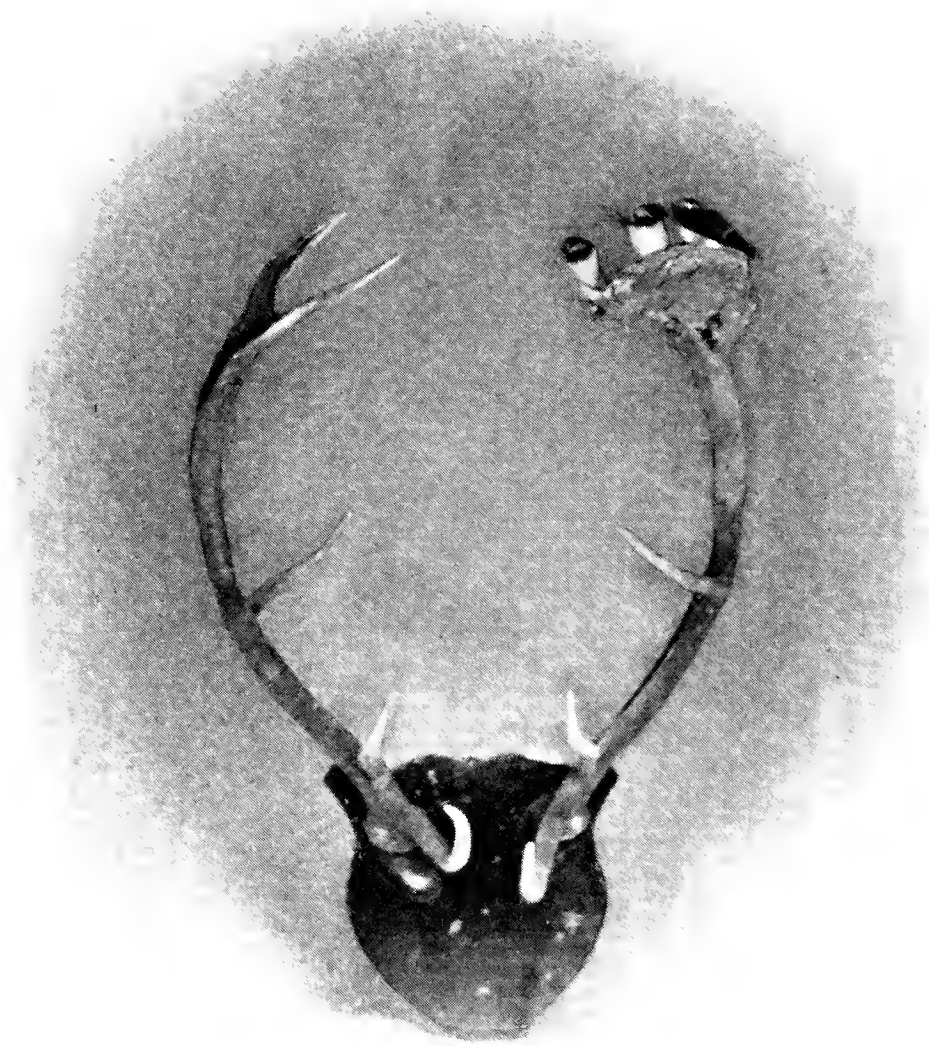
continuation of the supply of blood to the horn and the velvet, for the horn itself was quite

complete, and we know under ordinary circumstances the supply of blood to it then ceases, as well as to the skin covering. Such should have taken place by 1st September, but in this instance the blood-vessels were in full activity on 13th October, and the hair on the skin covering was already *twice as long as that usually found on a stag in velvet*, and to all appearance still growing.¹

A stag with a very curious facial malformation was shot by Major Claude Cane at Ardlair on 26th August 1896. I give a sketch of it which I made in Macleay's shop. It is obviously a case of malformation from birth, but the stag was in good condition and had managed to feed in spite of his drawbacks. Another curiosity was in the hands of Mr. Snowie this autumn (1896). We hear of lots of *sportsmen* objecting to the wire fencing, but here was a case in which a *stag*, shot by Mr. Ralph Sneyd at Glenquoich, had endeavoured to demolish the prison bars, for neatly entwined round the brows and bays were about three yards of deer-fence wire. The wonder was how the stag failed to become entangled and held fast, and how he managed to break the wire off so neatly and escape.

To conclude this chapter is the photograph of a pretty site chosen by swallows for their nest. For several years the birds have reared their young on the left crown of these antlers, and in 1886, when the photograph was taken, the young are seen about to fly.

¹ The chances are that if this stag had lived, the overflow supply would eventually have hardened into a mossed growth over the true horn, and after rubbing clean there would have been a stag's head similar to that of the two mossed roe heads at the end of Chapter X.



SWALLOWS' NEST AND YOUNG ON STAG'S HORNS AT WARNHAM COURT, SUSSEX, 1886

CHAPTER VII

FALLOW DEER

ALTHOUGH undoubtedly an introduction, this beautiful species of deer may now be regarded as one of our own mammals, or we should have to exclude the rabbit, the three rats, and others, which would certainly make the British list rather small. It is generally agreed that the Romans brought the fallow deer to this country from Italy or some other part of the Mediterranean littoral, where the species has always been indigenous.

Fallow deer present several different types. The true one, and that from which all the other divergences have originated, was more or less similar to those now found in the New Forest in a wild state.

The following are the well-known types and varieties :—

A. (True type) coats in winter very dark brown, with dun legs and bellies ; in summer fallow, *i.e.* light red with white spots. The brightness of the spots varies, but the colour never. They all change their coats simultaneously in May and October, just like wild roe.

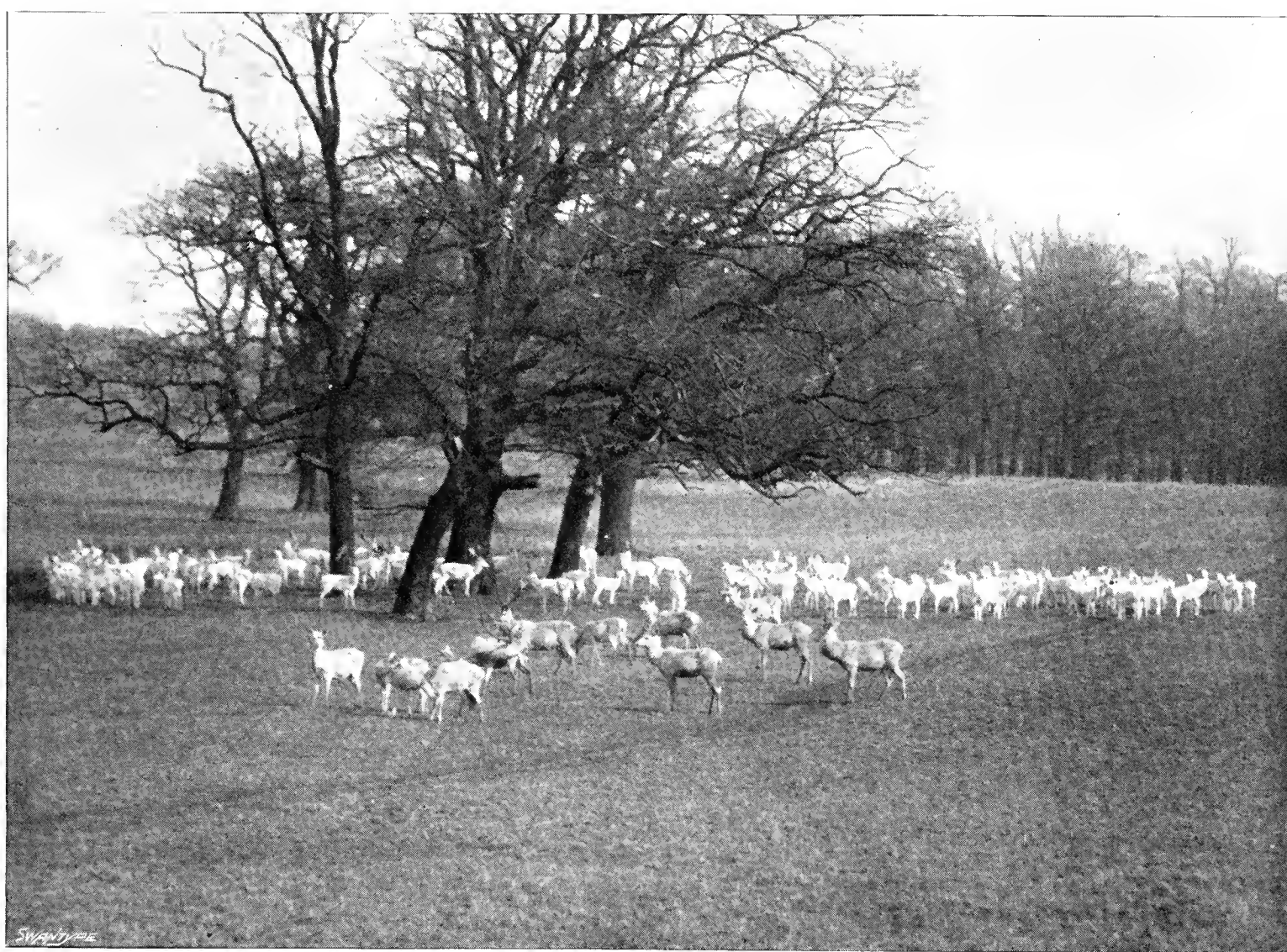
Taking England all over, this is nearly the commonest type, but a somewhat paler type is most often seen. Of the other varieties, the origin of their colours may, I think, be traced to absence or excess of colouring matter in the pigment of the skin, which has the effect of producing varieties, whether such irregularities are brought about by diet or other causes. When the varieties become so well marked as is here the case, we get in mixed herds every intermediate type between the white, the black, the pure dun colour, and the pure spotted form.

B. The black variety is evidently a melanism. This type has black or blackish-brown saddle, with somewhat paler under-parts. Whilst the tendency of most deer is to have a darker coat in the winter, it is a curious fact that this form is undoubtedly much blacker in the summer than in winter. In several parks this variety alone is kept, and though it is often so stated, I fail to see that the species is hardier than other types or carries different horns. In some parks where their horns may vary from those grown by the light spotted type it is merely the result of individuals carrying on the rut. In large parks where all sorts herd together the horns are no better in one form than in another. This black type was for a long time supposed to have been introduced from Norway by James I., but Mr. Harting has clearly shown that it existed here long before that date. Most likely the black varieties

simply came in the first place as sports, and were isolated and allowed to form a herd of their own, from which again others followed.

C. *The Red or Deep Dun-coloured Variety*.—This form is certainly the most uncommon. It has a richer shade of red in the coat than the true type, and slightly paler towards the under-parts; the neck is generally much darker and the face generally has a whitish muzzle. The coat varies very little in colour either in summer or winter, *and there are no traces of spots*.

D. *The White Variety*.—Very few perfect albinos exist, those with dark eyes being more common. The white herd at Welbeck, Notts, is a beautiful sight. They are at first glance for the most part pure white, but when looked at with a glass many have the darker hairs



THE HERDS OF WHITE, RED, AND FALLOW DEER, WELBECK, 1896

of the light spotted variety showing in the forehead. In this herd the calves occasionally revert to the original type, and are then killed.

At Sledmere is another white herd, though the fawns are mostly dark cream colour when born, getting lighter afterwards. A pretty variety is the result of the cross between the white variety and the original type.

It is hardly necessary here to mention the parks in which fallow deer are kept, for all readers so interested probably have Whitaker's and Shirley's works on the subject. It may be stated, however, that more land is given over to parks and deer in the county of Sussex than any other, and in that county amongst others is situated Petworth, the property of Lord Leconfield, which contains to-day the finest fallow deer I have seen in England. The average of this herd is exceptional. It is many years now since there was any fresh blood introduced, and there is little doubt that the herd, which is a big one, numbering nearly six hundred, should receive some newcomers. 675 acres is the extent of the range, and the park contains

very rich feeding, which seems always close and sweet even till late in winter. It must be of exceptional quality to keep the deer in such fine condition, as there is little other variety of food but grass. The great difficulty nowadays with a first-class herd of this description is to get new deer that are of equal quality with those at present in the park.

The best fallow deer in Scotland actually enclosed are those of Drummond Castle, Perthshire. This herd, numbering about four hundred, live under almost semi-feral conditions, and are much wilder than English park deer. When I was told of their remarkable weights I could hardly credit them at first, as they were said to be so much in excess of any English fallow deer. Lord Ancaster, however, kindly said I should have a day at them this year (1896) if I was in the North, and be able to weigh and examine them for my own satisfaction. Accordingly, one fine morning in September I went to Crieff and drove out to the park. Though we soon found the bucks, I had considerable difficulty in getting nearer than 200 yards, and as they "bunched," as they always do, we could not pick out the best. It was two



IN THE SUNSHINE

o'clock in the afternoon before I got a good chance within 80 yards at them. They were moved towards me up a pass, and I dropped the leading buck; then followed three more shots, and I had another good buck and two more badly wounded, which were soon finished. We took these bucks at once to the slaughter-house, and I personally superintended the weighing of the best one, and also took the measurements myself. The English mode of weighing bucks dressed conveys but little idea to the sportsman, so I weighed this buck according to the Highland method—that is, abstracting heart, liver, lights, and throttle, as well as the usual gralloch.

Weight (as he fell)	15 stone 6 lbs.
Weight clean (without heart, liver, lights, and throttle)	12 stone 5 lbs.
Weight of liver and heart	9 lbs.
Length from nose between horns and down the back to tip of tail	70 inches
Height at withers	39 inches
Girth behind shoulders	44 inches

The other three bucks were little inferior to this, and would probably have turned 12 stone apiece. The feeding in Drummond Castle is particularly luxuriant, and there has been

no introduction of new blood for seventy years. The deer are all of the dark spotted variety, with white throats in winter, and they carry long wide heads, though not very well palmated, but of them I shall speak later.

To compare these deer with a good English one Mr. Charles Lucas of Warnham Court kindly allowed me to shoot a big seven-year-old buck in his park a little later in the same year. I accordingly weighed and measured him in the same way as the Drummond one, and should consider him a good representative English buck.

Weight (clean)	9 stone
Length from nose to tip of tail	68 inches
Height at withers	37 inches
Girth behind shoulders	41 inches

There is no doubt that confinement is entirely foreign to the nature of all field creatures, and to deer in particular; immediately range is curtailed you get deterioration principally in body, for heads can be fed up to a certain extent, even though sometimes their wild characteristics may be lost. Red deer turned out from a park into Highland woods improve enormously in body when the wild feeding is good, even without the addition of artificial winter feeding; and in proportion fallow deer seem to improve still more, as has been proved by the Duke of Buccleuch's introductions from his English park at Boughton (Northamptonshire) into his Dumfriesshire woods. Mr. Dan Cooper tells me that a fallow buck was killed by Lord Charles Scott in Drumlanrig that weighed about 24 stone as he fell, 18 stone clean. This was altogether such a remarkable weight that he kindly wrote to Chonler, the Duke's head keeper at Dalkeith, to confirm it. The keeper wrote that he was confident the weights were correct, though he was not present at the weighing. Chonler himself writes to me that in Dalkeith Park he has killed a buck whose two-third weight was 176 lbs.; adding to him one-third, we get 264 lbs., or 18 stone 12 lbs. as he fell. He also gives me some interesting particulars showing how bucks shot at three different times rise and fall in weight during August and September.

	As they fell.	Clean.	Dressed.
Killed in August.	192	153	127
	195	150	125
	192	153	131
Killed beginning of September.	200	163	131
	203	163	139
	200	160	128
Killed end of September.	182	152	128
	171	140	118

All weights in lbs.

In the Earl of Southesk's park, Kinnaird Castle, are also fine fallow deer, whilst in Ireland the best beasts are probably at Killarney and in Lord Cloncurry's park at Hazlebach, County Kildare.

In England fallow deer have been wild for centuries in Epping as well as in the New Forest. Whilst the latter are fine, Mr. Lascelles tells me the Epping deer are few and degenerate in both head and body. In Rockingham Forest Whitaker also states that a few still exist.

During the last fifty years fallow deer in a wild state have increased greatly in Scotland, and though none were turned out earlier than the present century, in Perthshire at any rate, they are now quite regarded as old settlers. I cannot obtain any precise date as to their introduction into the Dunkeld and Athole woodlands, but hearsay places it at about seventy years ago. During an autumn and winter residence of eighteen years in the Dunkeld district I have had frequent opportunities of seeing and hearing all about the wild fallow



SHOWING HOW FALLOW DEER BUNCH CLOSE TOGETHER WHEN ALARMED

deer. Formerly they ranged as far north as Blair-Athole, but they are now, I think, seldom found north of the Logierait wood at Ballinluig. Their chief home is the big wood near Dunkeld and east to the Loch of Cluny and Lochs of the Lowes, south as far as Murthly, and east as far as Rohallion. In this district of about ten square miles they are found in small parties, and keep well to the woods, being exceedingly cunning and shy. MacIntosh, the Dowager Duchess of Athole's keeper, kills a good number annually, and Mr. Cox tells me there are now over thirty at Snaigow, where they have been preserving them for some years. These Dunkeld deer are both of the light spotted and black type. The next place where they have been wild for a considerable time is Dornoch wood in Sutherland. There I have also seen them; they are, however, very poor creatures, owing to wretched feeding and interbreeding, and carry miserable heads. A few wild fallow deer are also now found at Rosehall and Auchnashellach in Sutherlandshire, Kinloch-Luichart and Inchbae in Ross-shire, a few places in central Argyle, and Drumlanrig in Dumfriesshire.

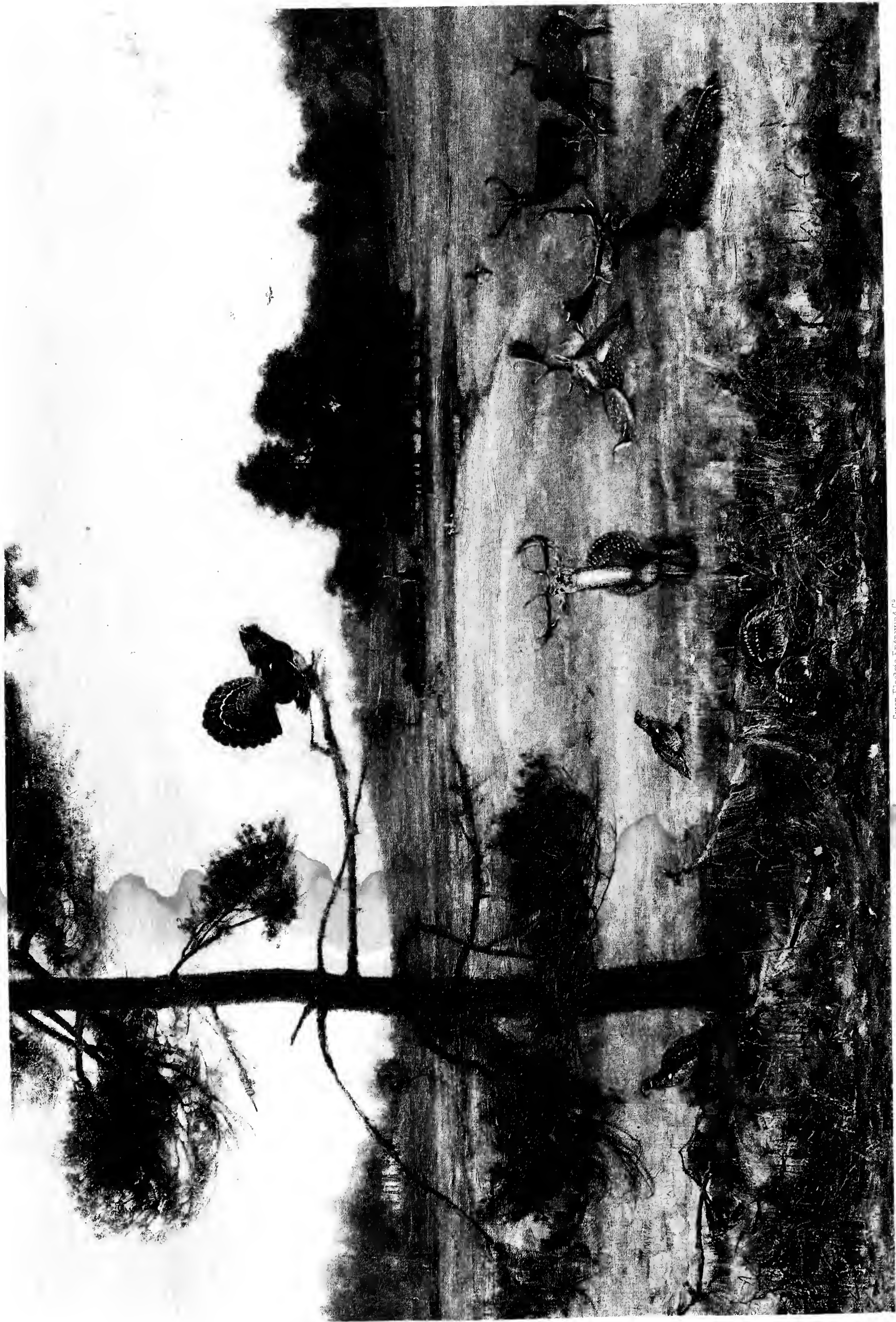
It is difficult to obtain much information about wild fallow deer in Ireland, and I know

of no place where they now exist in a perfectly wild state except in the hills of Cork (some fifteen miles from Fermoy). When I was quartered there in 1892 I saw two bucks brought in which had been killed by some peasants, but again these animals may have worked their way down from Kerry.

But few sportsmen know anything about fallow deer and their ways in a wild state, and unless it has come immediately under their notice to study these animals, they consign them at once to a back seat in degree of importance. In fact, they judge them as they have seen them in parks. Appearances are sometimes deceitful, and in no wild creatures may this be said to be the case more so than with the animals we are now considering. Fallow deer by nature are by far the shyest and most cunning of the three deer that inhabit our islands. It is we who have forced upon these animals that we wish them to be gregarious, and that we enjoy seeing their pretty forms wandering about in the glades and opens of our parks. Their habits are not so in a wild state, for they seldom move in parties exceeding five or six even in their own home in Southern Europe. Neither are they by nature dwellers in the open, being, like the roe, lovers of thick covert, from which they only move out to feed at dawn and sunset. The casual observer lolls in the grass of Greenwich or Richmond Park, and the fallow deer come close by, and perhaps feed from his hand, and are altogether so very tame and stupid-looking that he at once considers them to be endowed with only a poor order of intellect, and wanting in the caution displayed by their more dignified relations, the red deer. But that is exactly where he is wrong again. Give a fallow buck his liberty, let him once know *that men are making a practice of killing his relations*, and there is no deer, in this country at any rate, that is so capable of maintaining a whole skin as he is.

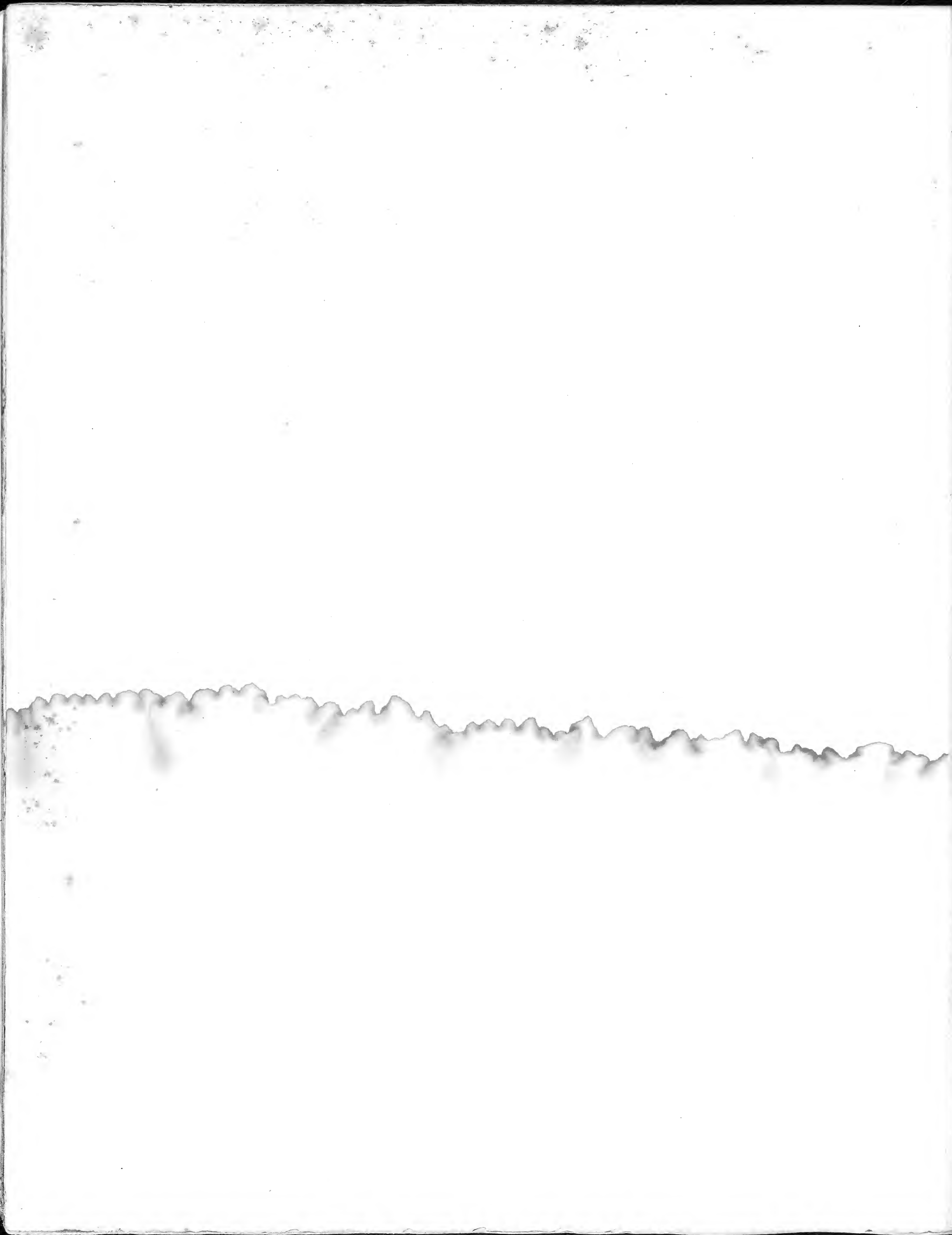
I have always noticed that the most intractable and cunningest birds and animals in a wild state, when captured and carefully treated become in the end by far the tamest. I could name plenty of examples, a good one perhaps being the Aoudad or Barbary wild sheep, which has broken the heart of more than one sportsman, and which in confinement became far too tame and inquisitive. All the sheep are like this, and they are not fools.

Now as an example which will, I think, speak for itself as to the powers of observation and cunning which can be displayed by an old fallow buck, a certain sportsman had for some years a large island off the west coast of Scotland in which were red deer and a few fallow. A certain big fallow buck he and his stalker were most anxious to obtain. The beast regularly frequented a hill-side by a wood, and when he was out in the open and there were stags there too, the chance of a shot at the latter was very small, as a fallow buck invariably picked the stalkers out from whichever direction they advanced. The head stalker, whom I used often to meet at Dunalastair, of which place he was afterwards head-keeper, dearly loved a crack about deer. Shaking his head he would say, "Don't talk about a stag being able to see and smell; he's no intilt ava wi' a bit buckie I aince kent." He told me that he made a vow that he would have that fallow buck's life, but when he left the island after four years' stalking that vow was still unfulfilled. Whilst declaring that any stag on the ground could have been shot for certain, the stalker stated that during these four years he had made five or six separate moves for the old buck, with the result that two difficult chances only were obtained, and both had resulted in failure. I am not pre-



Swan Electric Engraving Co.

On the Edge of Old Dunkeld Forest.



pared to say that every fallow buck is as cute an old fox as this one, but once he has reached maturity, which may be placed at six years, and is hunted with either shot-gun or rifle, I think that the fallow buck displays a resource and an ingenuity far exceeding that of the red deer. Last year (1895) I had occasion to shoot a number of fallow in two different parks. The animals were tame enough till the first shot was fired, then they were all off and on the *qui vive*, and would try every ruse, such as breaking back, dodging behind trees, and keeping constantly on the move, immediately one stopped to shoot.

Of course comparisons are always odious, and the fallow deer's love for cover at once puts him aside as a much inferior beast of the chase to the red deer. Perhaps too what most men admire so much in the stag is his dignified grace, machine-like action, and fine free-moving shoulder. This the fallow buck lacks. He sometimes starts off with a show as if he too could display on a lesser scale those gallant strides, but it is a poor imitation, and he is in his trotting movements but a potterer at the best.

It is, I think, best to separate one's remarks here, first giving a few notes on the animals in a wild state and then of their lives under more restricted conditions.

The Dunkeld district may now be regarded as the permanent home of the species in Scotland, and they have certainly increased during the past twenty years throughout the heavily-wooded country over which they roam. My father during this time always had a shooting in this district, and for thirteen years we occupied Murthly, which was frequently visited by the deer in their passage from their western boundary, Rohallion, to Snaigow, Cardney, and the Dunkeld woods. They always crossed the Tay at one particular place above Stenton, and, never staying very long, were seldom shot. Jimmy Keay used to rush in and say there was a big buck feeding in such and such a turnip field, and I used on my part to rush out, find nothing, come back and tell Jimmy he must really sign the pledge. That big buck used to feed regularly for one morning in the same spot, and when you got up at unearthly hours and crawled through damp woods to encompass his destruction, news arrived that he had been seen feeding quietly in another turnip field six miles away.

The fallow bucks quite spoiled our tempers at one time, and it is wonderful how horribly bloodthirsty a man becomes after a period of "sells." So one day when Mr. Bett sent down a note from Rohallion asking me to come up at once and help to assassinate two black bucks that had climbed down the rocks and jumped into the Buffalo Park the game was altogether too sweet.

The Buffalo Park, I may say, has an interesting history; it was where the late Sir William Stewart kept his buffaloes which he brought over from Western America. Sir William was one of the first men "out west," and his life was a complete romance; the mystery attending his death has never yet been solved. Certain aspersions were cast on his pluck after Waterloo, and to show that they were false he went out to the Rocky Mountains and lived amongst the Sioux for five years. There he became a first-class bandit, but displayed such courage that they made him a chief. Wearying of his wild life, he returned to Murthly, bringing with him, however, about a dozen of his pals amongst the Sioux and a herd of buffaloes. The latter he lodged in a beautiful park at Rohallion, surrounding it with a stone wall seven feet high and with a wire fence on the top of that. The Red Indians, however, were not so easily housed or kept quiet. In a word, they played

the very deuce, and soon had the country-side in a state of terror. They used to drive about in a lifeboat on wheels, and drawn by six cart horses, but varied existence by occasionally swooping down on a farmhouse, scaring the inmates and making free with whatever they could lay their hands on. These little escapades were of course always squared afterwards, and none enjoyed the fun more than Sir William, who was very popular with his people. If my reader is a lover of *Punch*, which he is pretty sure to be, he will recollect a drawing by John Leech of Mr. Briggs being taken through the Buffalo Park by his friend. That friend was my father, and Mr. Briggs was of course Leech himself. I have often heard the story about that day amongst the buffaloes.

By and by the buffaloes died off or were killed, and the last old bull broke out of the park somehow, and meeting the mail coach going north, proceeded to knock the stuffin' out of the horses. But there was an unfeeling man on the coach who had a rifle and no sense of humour, so the last of the Scotch buffaloes had to go.

But to return to our fallow bucks which had delivered themselves into the hands of

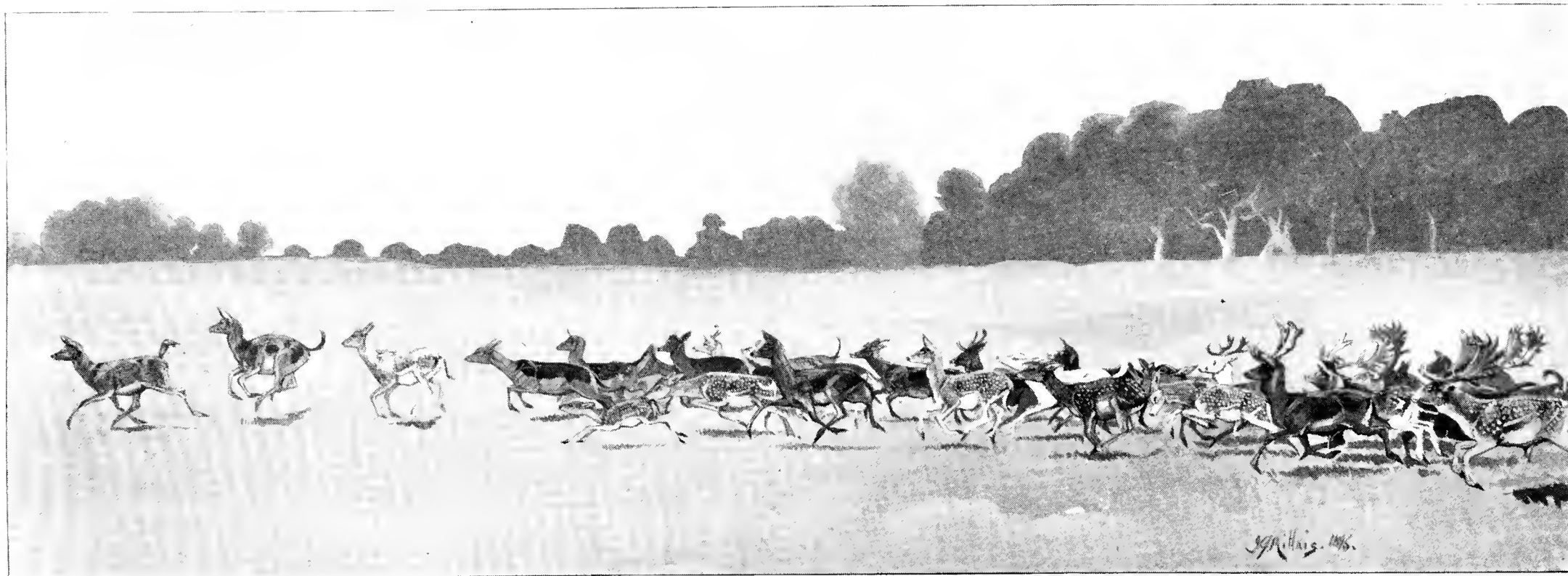


DOES AND CALVES

the destroyers—at least so we thought. To make a long story short, we never even got a shot at them the first day, though the park was not of great size. The next day I got a chance at one of the bucks at about forty yards and broke his foreleg, and we now made sure of him, but just as both the bucks were coming on nicely to Keay, the unwounded one smelt a rat, made a jump, and scrambled right up the high stone wall and squeezed himself under the wires at the top, being immediately followed by the second buck, whom we considered quite incapable of performing such a feat. The above is an absolute fact, and the keepers, Mr. Bett, and myself were alike astonished at the agility displayed by the beasts. What an animal like the deer *will* jump when he is fairly put to it by fear or impulse is a very different thing from their actions of calmer moments. I have never had an opportunity of testing the length of the fallow deer's sight compared with that of red deer, but I am convinced that where it is necessary for them to use their eyes for self-protection the sight is *quicker* even than roe, and much quicker than red deer. Their powers of scent are perhaps about equal to red deer and superior to roe. Fallow deer in big woods nearly always lie very close, and then break back through the beaters. In proportion to its size a fallow buck is very tenacious of life, much more so than red deer, and requires to be struck in the right place.

I have noticed as a rule it is the male only of these wild fallow deer that travels far from the main Dunkeld and Cardney woods ; a few generally cross the Tay and move west and south at the end of July, returning again by the mating season at the beginning of November. Perhaps, like the wapiti of Western America, they have learned the danger which may be incurred at the expense of the pleasure of hearing their own voices at the time of love and war ; at any rate the wild fallow are remarkably silent, only giving vent to a grunt now and again, and not keeping up his wooing all day like a mating buck in a park.

There are few deer and antelopes that are not worth studying, for nearly every member of the various groups betrays a strong individuality that is entirely his own. Both the artist and the naturalist who wishes to conscientiously do his work and render justice to the several individuals should, properly speaking, give up many months of observation to each separate creature, and it is only by so doing *professionally* that the observer can really get at the true *heart* of the character which governs all the habits and movements of any particular

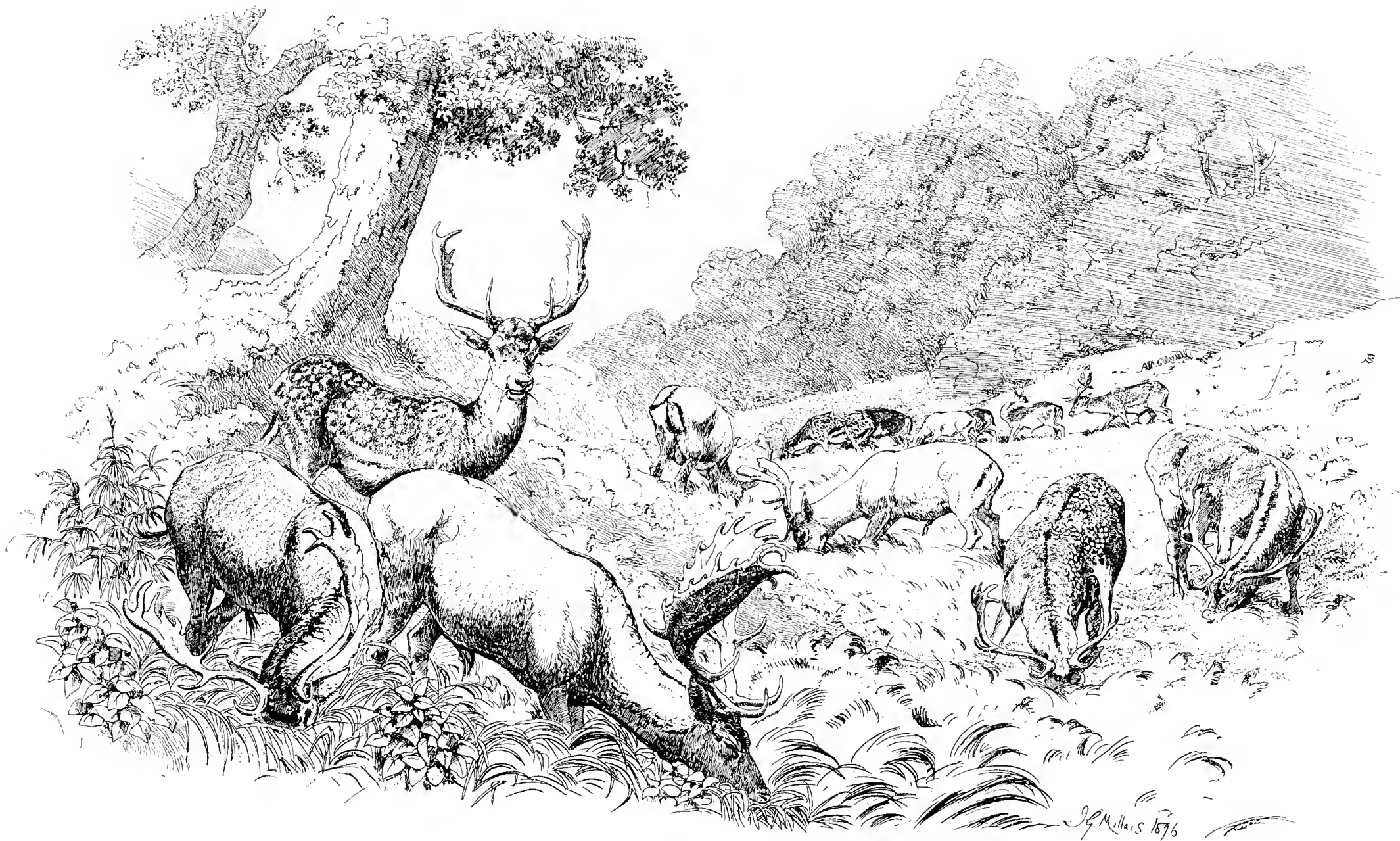


THE USUAL ORDER OF THE SEXES WHEN TRAVELLING

creature. I am not one of those who, just because a beast happens to be very common and under our noses every day of our lives, think that we know all about him ; I think the best of us know very little about anything. It is perhaps for that very reason that most people utterly neglect one so common as the fallow buck. We turn up our so-called standard works and find the most minute descriptions of *Sitatunga* and *Ovis poli*, but poor old *Cervus dama*, who, like the poor, is ever with us, is dismissed in a few lines. Personally I think one will repay study just as well as the other. Anything in the way of animal life, well-nigh unattainable, though it may be of but ordinary interest, is eagerly sought after by the hunter. Yet to make a comparison, *Ovis poli* is not of much greater interest from the point of view of his general habits than the Highland ram with his beautiful curly horns. If the two could be made to change places one day, we should have plenty of keen and plucky hunters who would dash off at once to the ends of the earth, and could then write up his natural history and be happy in the possession of his noble trophies. Now I hope the reader will forgive this moralising, but I only wish to show that we do not know everything yet even about the sparrow in the street, and very few educated people recognise him in the

cabinet as a skin. Which, by the bye, recalls my poor father's remark when some one was chaffing me about writing a big volume on the subject of grouse: "Ah well, you can write a book bigger than the Bible about bluebottles *if you only know enough about them.*"

Taking everything into consideration, the fallow deer is about the most satisfactory animal we could possibly have in our parks. They are extremely beautiful, their venison is first-rate, and they are never dangerous, the latter perhaps the most important of all, for one may say that, hardly without exception, the elaphine group are not to be implicitly



FALLOW DEER FEEDING

trusted if allowed to become the least tame, whilst under such circumstances the sweet and gentle-looking little roebuck is the very Devil himself.

Richard Jefferies pithily remarks that "a park without deer is like a wall without pictures," and for those who live in the country and are so fortunate as to possess both, the animals and their ways are a continual source of enjoyment and interest.

In summer, provided the weather is warm and sunny, the fallow deer have their regular times for rest and food, and are much the same in this respect as the red deer, but as a general rule they are more restless, getting up and lying down again more frequently and feeding for shorter periods; particularly so is this the case in winter, when they do not rest for nearly so long a period as their larger brethren, but split up into little groups and move about, more particularly when food is scarce. Whitaker gives all directions for the feeding of fallow deer, etc., so there is next to nothing to be said on this subject. One curious fact, however, on the subject of their tastes is worth mentioning. During the very severe winter of 1894 the fallow deer in a certain Sussex park were somewhat neglected, and hay,

which constituted their only extra, was not put out for them until the heavy snow had entirely covered the ground in December. The deer were by that time in a miserable plight, and absolutely refused to touch the food that was put down for them—doubtless on account of the damp. They now began to practically die of starvation, and it was noticed the animals evinced a desire to get into the ground around the old ivy-covered mansion. Some were allowed to do so. Once there they made straight for the ivy on the walls and ravenously devoured it. After this all the leaf was shorn from the sides of the house and



DOES PLAYING. EARLY SUMMER

the deer were allowed in the garden. This stock of food probably saved the greater number of the deer, for they refused all other food till the ivy was finished.

A wet spring or wet autumn is very fatal to fallow deer, as they contract liver fluke. Some years ago at Savernake I remember seeing, I should think, nearly half the stock dead or dying from this cause, and this on a fairly dry and sandy soil.

One of the prettiest sights in connection with the habits of these animals is to see the does and calves playing in the spring. The old bucks and males over three years do not indulge in such exuberance of joy, as they doubtless consider such light-hearted frolics beneath their dignity. Like the art critics, they rest under the trees, look on, and patronise.

Two or three of the does, even the old ones, for they do not ever seem to get *blasé*, and a last year's calf or two start off and chase each other sometimes for over a mile, perhaps even right round the park. After every "short burst" they stop, buck, and skip about in the most ridiculous fashion, and again shaking their heads, pretend to butt at each other like their horned relations. This brings them to a standstill, but only for a moment, when off they go again, chasing one another as hard as they can pelt. So the high jinks go on till they perhaps have made the circuit of the park and worked back to their original position. These are the high old times of youth before nature reminds the prospective mothers of the stern realities of life, and that their figures are not quite what they were a month or two previously. A fallow doe, though doubtless as devoted to her calf as a red hind, seldom displays the motherly concern of the latter when danger threatens. She is much more cunning, and will gallop right away from it and join the herd sooner without hanging round and ostensibly showing her distress, as the other species of deer will often do. I think too that fallow calves get on their legs quicker and can take care of themselves sooner than the red-deer calves. The fallow doe generally drops her calf in the first week in June, and in good



FALLOW DEER MOVING AWAY

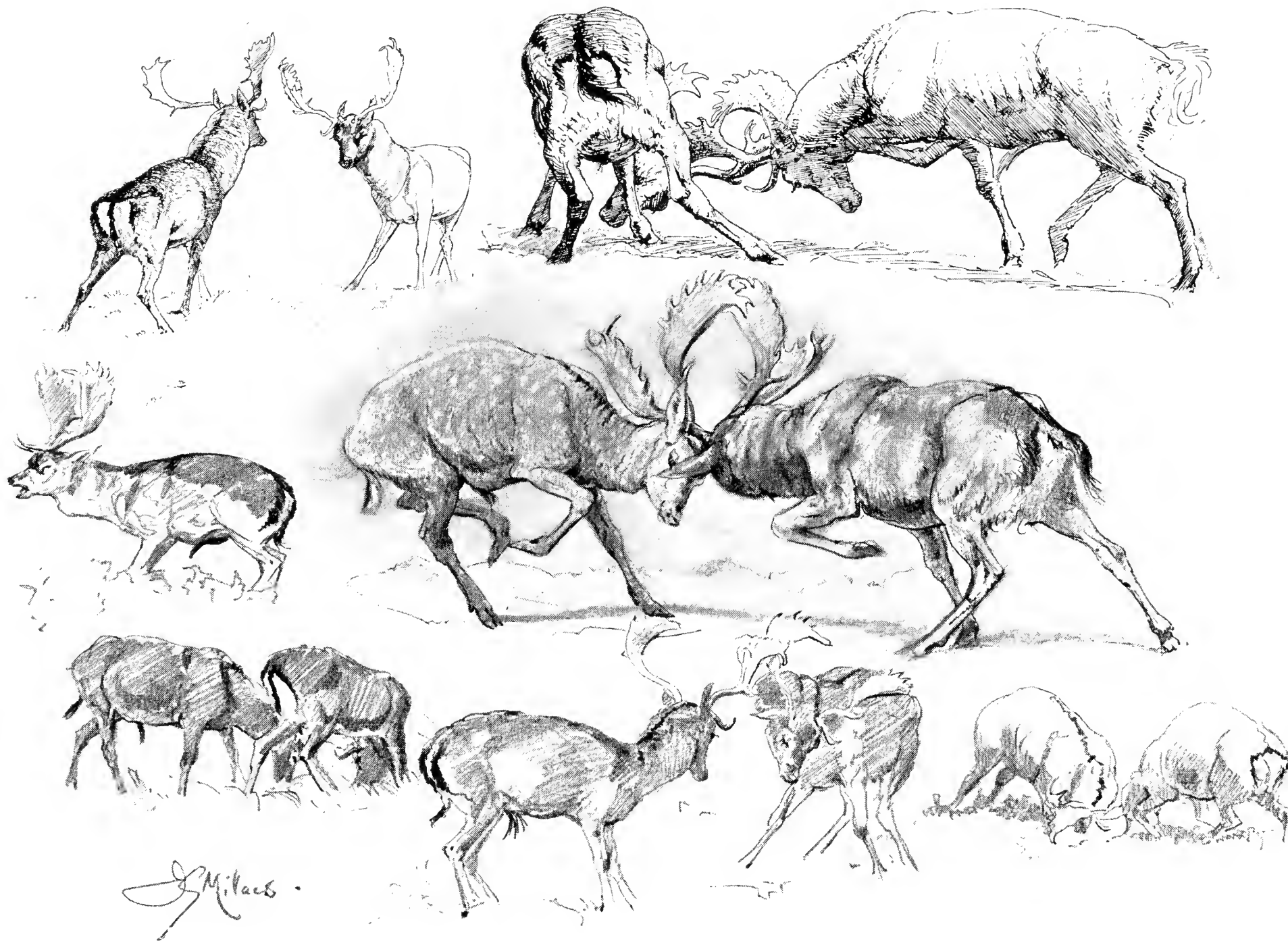
seasons a little earlier; she rarely has more than one, though sometimes there are two. Occasionally we hear of calves appearing, as in the case of red deer, in any of the succeeding months, even as late as November, but this is of course very rare.

Excepting in a park which is public and the deer have people amongst them all day long, fallow deer usually become shy during the summer months, always evincing distrust and taking immediate alarm if anything like real danger threatens. Food is abundant, so man can be avoided, and it is only on the approach of the rutting season that they once again become somewhat tame and indifferent to surroundings.

The rutting season lasts a very short time, though the big bucks begin hustling one another about and trying their horns almost as soon as they are clean. One seldom sees a really good set-to until a big buck has monopolised a bunch of does and another comes to try conclusions with him. About the first of October the necks of the big bucks swell greatly, and they become more and more unsettled amongst themselves till the 25th of that month, when we generally hear the first calls. The rutting cry of the fallow buck is neither melodious nor awe-inspiring like the yawning roar of a stag. It is half a grunt and half a deep-toned bark, and can be heard at a distance of two miles if the day is still. When the buck produces this sound the head is not held aloft and neck stretched, as with the stag, or in any position, as with the roe. It is kept if anything below its normal angle, and jerked upwards slightly as the call is emitted. When very savage the buck will sometimes trot

round and emit a succession of grunts one after the other, and does not exercise the same care in keeping his harem away from outsiders that the stag does.

After the usual fights which the big buck has to pass through in the first instance to gain his wives, the serious trouble of keeping them together begins. Now let us watch another rival, who perhaps is scarcely as good, and who has as yet been a bachelor but is now love-sick. He really means to annex some of the fair ones, so let us see what he will do. If he really means to fight, you will notice that he is not feeding, or only taking nibbles now and again. Gradually he works nearer and nearer to the objects of his affections and their guardian, and



BUCKS FIGHTING

I believe he can judge to a nicety exactly how near he dare go without provoking a head-long charge, for he funks that, and knows that the first hard blow counts for as much with fallow bucks as with men. Having gained a point, we will say generally under a tree thirty or forty yards away, there he stands and glares at the prospect of love or war before him. His proximity is generally the cause of his bringing matters soon to a head, and it often happens that at the very last moment his valour vanishes as the big buck turns on him, for he makes off as hard as his legs can carry him. Again, I have waited till I was chilled to the bone, expecting to see the errant knight set to work and start to fight, but he has remained in one or two positions simply staring the whole blessed day without approaching a yard nearer, merely giving a sighing grunt as much as to say, "I should like to fight, but——" How like poor human nature! Then again there is the buck who means business from the

start, and the two beasts charge at once, and meet with a resounding whack, which can be heard afar. Once they have thus met, a fallow buck fight is a poor show; they are savage enough, but they simply cannot hurt each other much the way they go about it. It is all shove, fence, let go and clash again, and from the shape of the horns and always keeping their heads as the objective, they never get properly home with an undercut about the heart or neck, which is the killing stroke with the red stag and the Jap. It is extremely rare for a buck to be killed by another, although there are instances of such having occurred. After the battle is over, and the defeated one is driven right away, he is simply too miserable and dejected for words.

I was, at the end of October 1894, tremendously interested one morning in a big buck in Boughton Park who beat off three rivals in a short time. The vanquished went and half hid themselves in the reeds of a pond, and allowed myself and a companion to almost touch them before they made off. There were two other good bucks which were still harassing "the man in possession," and I was keen to see the end of it all, but recollected I had a pressing engagement in a church close by, where I was to get married or some nonsense of that sort. After the last blessing had been given and everybody had thoroughly laid themselves out for a first-class attack of indigestion, I wanted to be off to the park again. The sweet creature who had caught me in an unguarded moment, however, said it could not be done, I must come off for my honeymoon like a good boy. But there—when did a woman ever understand business?

Under the false conditions of crowding and restricted range, fallow deer do many things which are not their natural habit. In parks, in addition to keeping in large herds where food is plentiful, the sexes mix indiscriminately except during the rutting season, though during horn-growing time it is usual for all the bucks of from three years of age and upwards to keep apart by themselves; on the slightest alarm, however, all sexes run together and keep in a close mass. Probably no wild animals press together so closely as do fallow deer when first startled; they seem to be aware of the fact that if the eye of their murderer is upon them he shall at any rate have some difficulty in selecting his victim. Having quite made up their minds that it is time to be off, you will notice how very still and rigid are those whose duty it is not to lead. If there is an old doe amongst them, she will thrust her head forward, accompanied with a step to right or left, as if scarcely assured which line to take. That is soon decided, for she alone makes a short run forward, perhaps springing into short bucks in the air for a few yards, or adopting one or two flashy bits of action with tail in the air before finally settling down to her pottering trot or more decided gallop, according to the proximity and nature of the danger. The rest of the herd rely implicitly on her good judgment, watching only her actions and her cocked ears. They themselves follow with leisure and take their places in the usual deer order, old yeld does in front, then does with calves, prickets, three-year-old males, and lastly old bucks. The guide may perhaps have only gone a little way when down goes her head, and as human scent is noticed she comes to a momentary standstill, and shying off to one side, she will not cross it unless forced over, and those following immediately behind swerve and conform to all the movements of their guide. All the actions of an animal in repose or movement can best be shown by means of illustration, so I will say no more on the subject.

When changing their coats in the spring, fallow deer pull it out for themselves in mouthfuls, whilst I have noticed that red deer, both stags and hinds, get rid of much of the old hair by rolling and wallowing in their mud holes. For this reason a low-lying park is often more cut up in the spring than in the autumn.

It is unnecessary to say anything here about catching fallow deer, as copious directions are given in many books, and there are two firms which make a profession of it. I was, however, assisting at a big catch in Denne Park this spring (1896), which had been organised by Mr. Marsh, and I learnt something I had not seen before, and that was how to carry a



If held thus by a strong man, a fallow deer can be carried without its attempting to struggle or strike.

living deer without hurt to itself or its captor. After a deer had been disentangled from the net into which it had rushed, Mr. Marsh would get some one to give the beast a hoist as he himself drew it up by the hind legs over his own shoulders. One would scarcely imagine it would be so, but the buck, which a second or two before was all fight, now lay over the man's back without offering a struggle or attempting to use his horns. It takes a big powerful man such as Mr. Marsh to thus carry a living buck (as I have drawn it from nature) any distance, and then it is as well to have some one to accompany the bearer and steady the head, not that the beast will use it, but simply because it wobbles helplessly from side to side and might trip the man up. But to all intents and purposes the buck is as helpless as a log. The deer-catcher told me to try it with a doe, as I am no Hercules, so I

hoisted up three of the liveliest of the does and carried them to the deer cart in this manner without their offering to budge.

At Eastwell the fallow deer are caught by dogs bred and trained for the purpose. They course the buck, and seizing the ears, hold him down till assistance arrives.

Doubtless many animals are to a small extent interested and curious about music. Seals are particularly so, but then seals are about the most intelligent and sweet-natured creatures in existence. Thomas Bell, who wrote the *British Quadrupeds*, must have been either a great wag or absolutely devoid of any sense of humour. He seriously quotes the following from Playford's *Introduction to Music*:—"Travelling some years since, I met in the road near Royston a herd of about twenty (bucks) following a bagpipe and violin,



FALLOW BUCKS

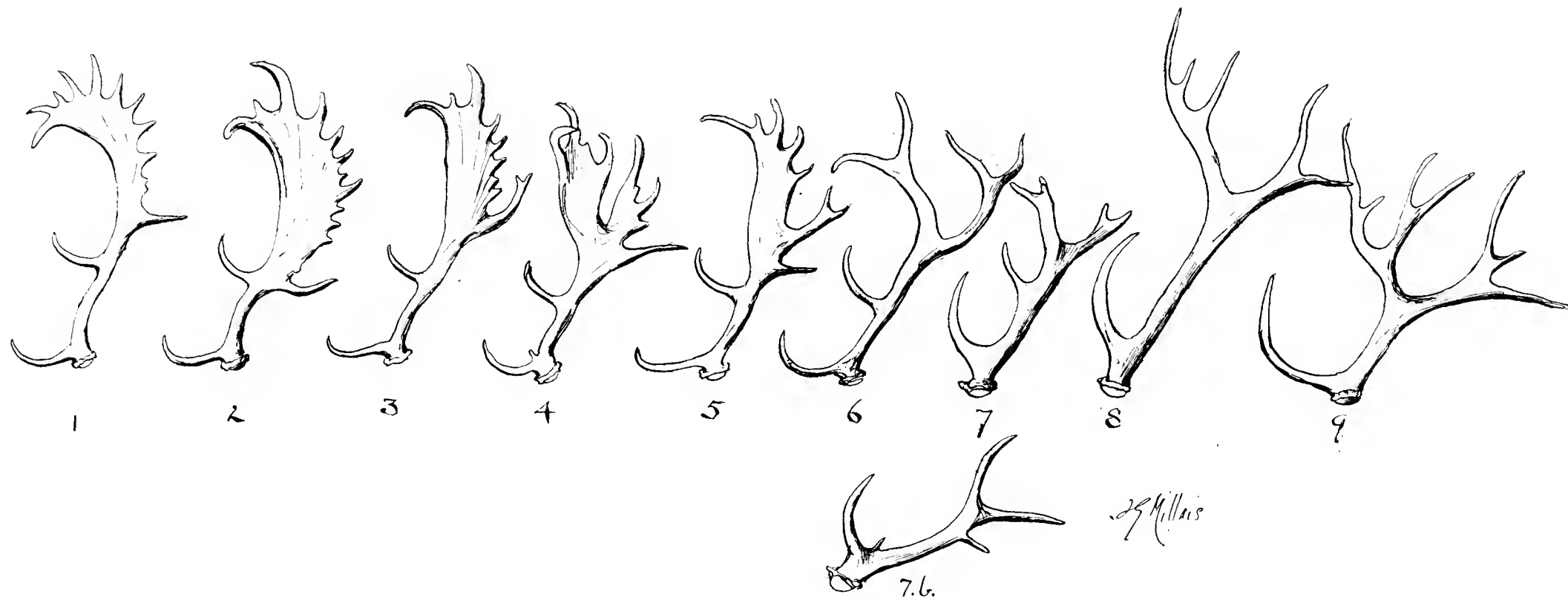
which, while the music played, went forward; when it ceased they all stood still; and in a like manner they were brought out of Yorkshire to Hampton Court." That is all! However, he more or less explains himself by a dissertation on the "poetical truth in the power of the lyre." They had funny ways of spelling in those days. I am sure he must have been a rather jolly old professor too, for he goes on to tell of the wild joy with which his efforts on the flute were received by the cows and other animals.

Here is an excellent picture of the light and dark spotted varieties. I had just shot these bucks when a young friend, Mr. Tom Wickham, who had recently commenced photography, came up and wished to take them. The time was evening, and the snap-shot fiend had only perpetrated about three horrors in his wicked life before this, so I had no hope that the result would be better than a Whistlerian nocturne. A day or two afterwards, however, he came in with this capital picture, and I do not think the best professional could have done better, for every hair can be seen.

CHAPTER VIII

FALLOW DEER HORNS

THE classification of the Asiatic deer, as well as that of the great wild sheep, has always been the subject of some discussion both amongst sportsmen and naturalists. Now the fallow deer,



SHOWING THE CLOSE ASSOCIATION OF THE FALLOW BUCK WITH CERTAIN EASTERN DEER

1. Small Asia Minor fallow buck. 2. English park fallow buck. 3. A very common type, English park fallow buck (showing tendency of back point to lose itself in the palm). 4. Castle Caldwell horn with split palm (back point sometimes retained, sometimes lost). 5. New Forest head (wild New Forest heads are also often as No. 6). 6. Horn of the big fallow buck, now only found on the littoral by the Gulf of Marmora. 7 and 7 *b.* Horns of Persian fallow deer (*C. mesopotamicus*), from Luristan hills (the small back point is still often present). 8. Horn of typical *C. duvaucelli*, India. 9. Horn of typical *C. schomburgki*, Siam.

the Persian fallow deer (and the extinct *C. browni*, *C. megaceros*, and *C. ruffi*) are, in the deer groups, generally shunted into a corner by themselves; whilst the swamp deer (*C. duvaucelli*) and Schomburgk's deer (*C. schomburgki*) are considered to be most closely allied to the Sambar group. Closely allied is true enough, but these two latter are in reality none other than glorified *Cervus dama*, which Eastern environment has caused to alter slightly. As a matter of fact we have the very closest contiguity of species between the small fallow deer from Asia Minor, the (erroneously called) *C. mesopotamicus* from the Gulf of Marmora littoral, the (true) *C. mesopotamicus* in Persia, *C. duvaucelli* in India, and *C. schomburgki* in Burmah.

This is hardly the place to enter upon such a discussion, so I shall merely confine myself

to the bare statement that all these deer *are* closely connected by their movements, habits, and external and internal characteristics. The typical wild fallow deer of Asia Minor presents a type of horn-growth exactly similar to our park deer of to-day, only that the horns are longer, and the palms narrower, and the whole animal is smaller.

This is the animal from which our fallow deer is *supposed* to be descended. Such is quite likely to have been the case, but most probably another and finer form was also intro-



A HEAD IN VELVET

duced at the same period, or later. The New Forest type are far more like a deteriorated form of the other big fallow deer about which we know so little, and which is only now found on the Asiatic shores of the Sea of Marmora, where it is now threatened with extinction. The latter animal is altogether a fine beast, approaching the red deer in size, and shows the broken-up type of horn so commonly found in these New Forest fallow bucks. Island forms, too, do not improve, so we may assume that our present species is more probably an inferior form of some finer animal, such as the Marmora buck or *C. mesopotamicus*, or a hybrid, if it may be so called.

Mr. Gerald Lascelles has been kind enough to have the best of his heads photographed

for me, and a glance at their picture will show better than any explanation the strong tendency there is in all the horns to bifurcate in the upper branches and not to fill up in one palmated mass, as is the case in park fallow deer. Now and again heads without any sign of this break seem to occur, and the back point shows in its proper place without being carried away up into the back palms, which therefore shows that either one type is the same as the other with individual variation, or that two original types must have existed in England.



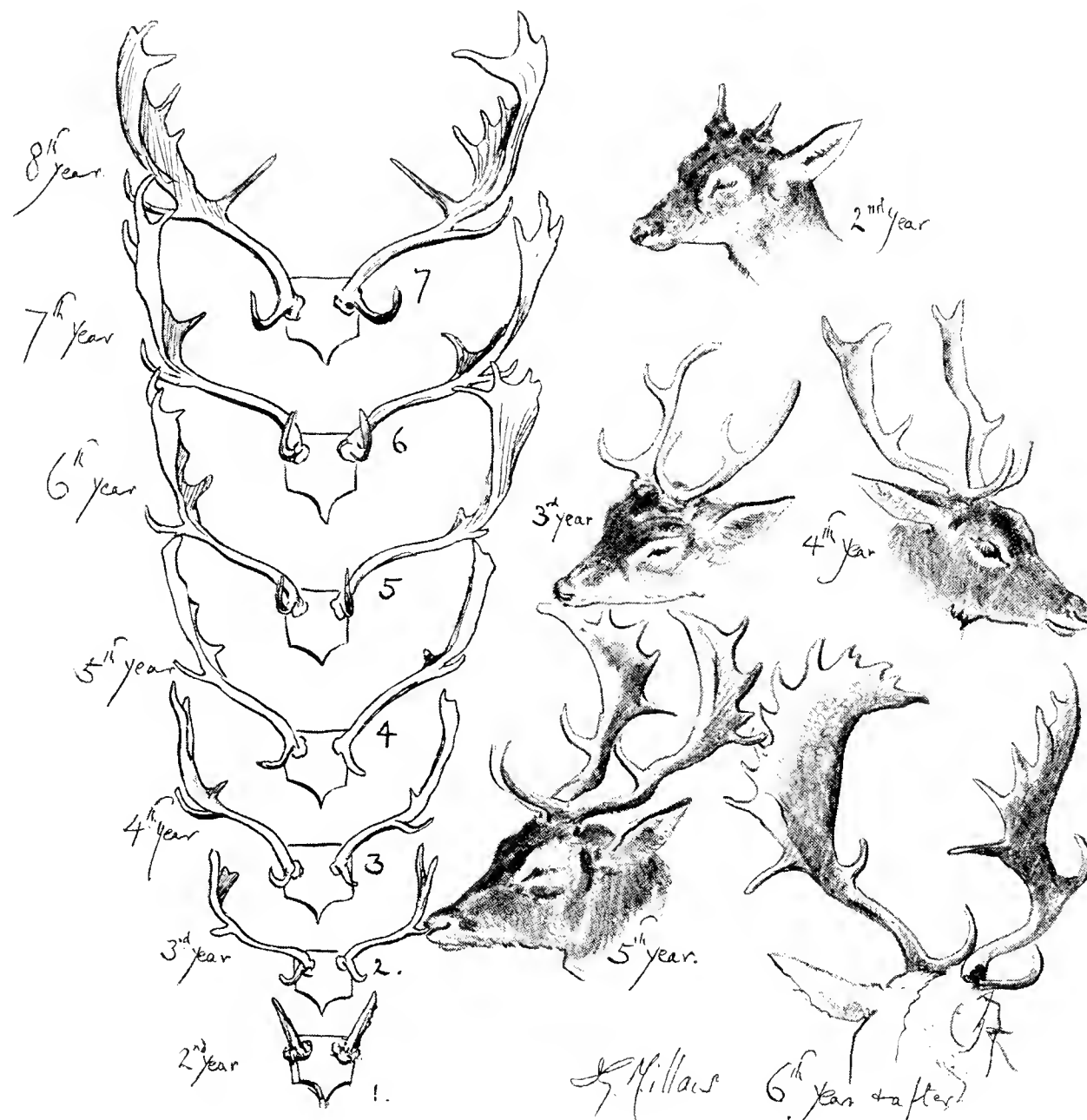
NEW FOREST HEADS (WILD), QUEEN'S HOUSE, LYNDHURST, HANTS

These New Forest heads are remarkable for their length, and the length of their points, especially in the case of the brows. Mr. Lascelles writes, "Most of the finest heads, especially old deer, differ very much from the normal form of a park head. The palmated part is, in these heads, very much split up, so much so as to look like red deer heads with an abnormal number of points, and almost to lose the palmated character altogether—some indeed have lost it entirely." The measurement of the two best heads he gives as follows :—

Length	Span (extreme)	Circumference of Beam
27	25	$4\frac{1}{4}$ inches
$26\frac{1}{2}$	24	$4\frac{1}{2}$ inches

It is hardly necessary to describe the typical park fallow deer's head beyond saying that the constant tines are brow, tray, and a third tine at the back, above which, on the posterior margin of the palm, are a number of small points, which culminate in a long point bending forward, and generally situated second or third from the front tine, which itself curves downward and inward.

It is a curious fact that although it is so common to see in parks perfectly formed red-deer heads of twelve or fourteen points, a really good fallow buck's head that is perfectly formed, well grown, and typical is now quite a rarity. There are very few parks where the heads are really good, because few people take sufficient interest in their deer to prevent bad-



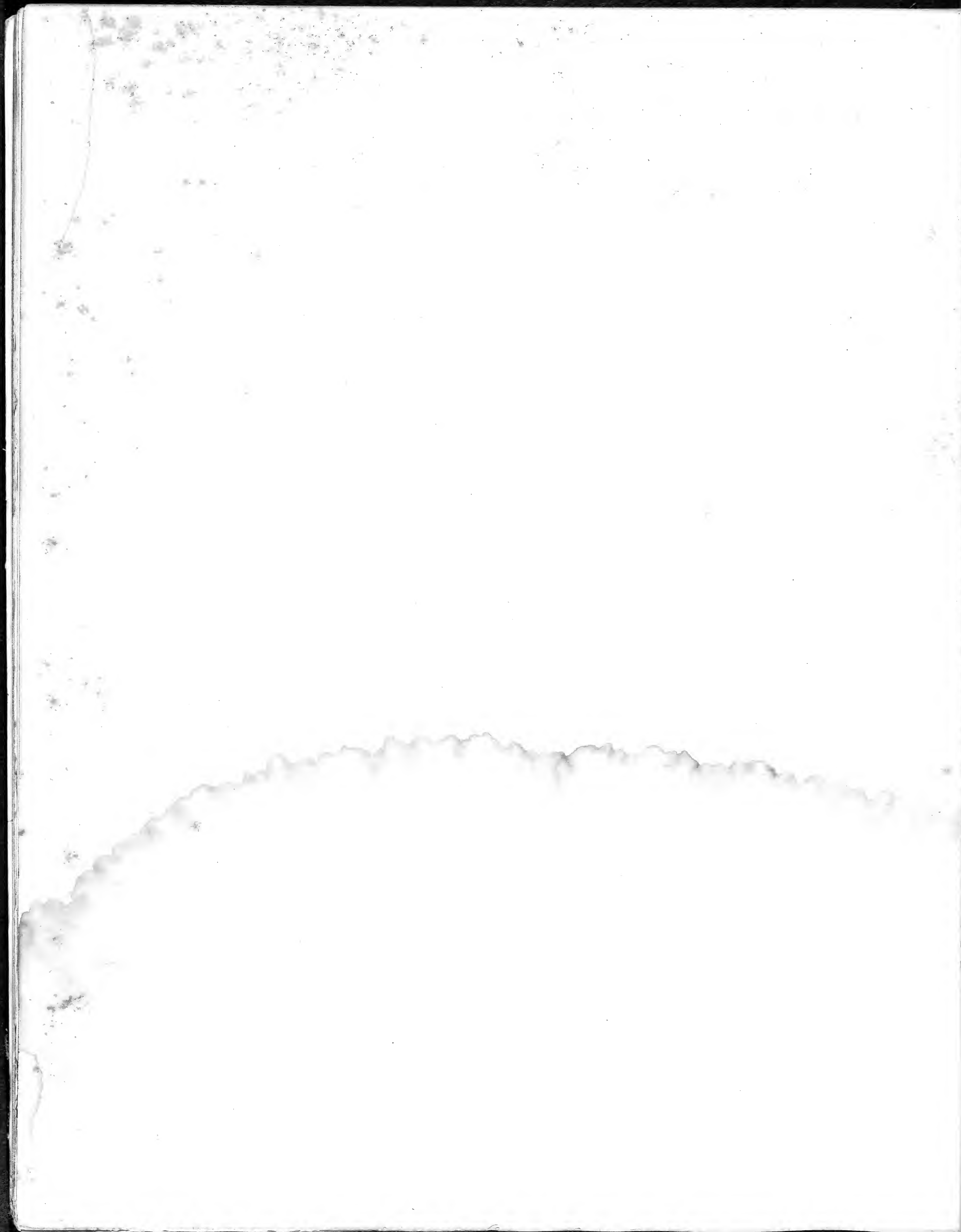
HORNS OF FALLOW BUCKS (WARNHAM) DURING THE SUCCESSIVE YEARS

headed bucks taking the rut, or study their other requirements. We see plenty of deer whose actual weight of horn-growth is quite sufficient to be spread out in well-shaped heads, but in forty-nine cases out of fifty the points along the posterior margin are only just indicated on the edge, or put forth in such blunt ungraceful knobs that they entirely destroy the artistic grace of the whole. Nine men out of ten have probably never seen a really good buck's head, and become accustomed to the inferior article. Were you to speak to them about the points on a fallow deer's horns they would only laugh and say that knobs and excrescences did not count for points, and clubs of horn with the ends worn and knocked about were scarcely things of beauty. This is, of course, all very true, but then again there are heads finely shaped, rough, and having all the points properly developed in their proper order if you only know where to look for them. Then again, taste itself takes extraordinary forms. Many do not care for heads of animals with palmated horns, whilst a friend of mine, and a



In the Flush of the Crimson Morn.

own District Engraving Co.



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man of very good judgment too, will look at nothing but moose and fallow deer heads. A still more extraordinary individual is one of the very best sportsmen of our time. Some fifty years ago he spent eight or ten years big game shooting in India, and was altogether a most successful hunter. His house in London is simply full of heads, but they are principally American and African, which he has bought or have been given to him by his friends. Of his own trophies from the East there is but a solitary moth-eaten tiger skin and one Sambhur head. He has in his day probably shot more stags and roe than most men, and as I was looking over his collection I noticed an exceptionally fine Highland stag's head over the dining-room door and asked the owner its history. "Ah, yes," he said, "isn't that a topper? I bought that at an auction in Edinburgh several years ago." Now is not that a funny man? when he might, as most men would have been proud to do, have covered his walls with trophies of his own shooting, each of which might have its own little history.

The bucks cast their horns in May, and, as in the case of all other deer, the oldest beasts first, and so on, till the prickets shed theirs about the end of June. After the first buck is devoid of horns, the distended sides of the skin round the top rim of the pedicle, which are already charged with blood, flap over gradually till they meet on the summit, and the new horns then make a start. The growth goes on just in the same way as in the stag, and I need say nothing further, as I give a drawing done direct from nature of a buck's head as it actually grew from start to finish. In the same way the reader can follow the phases of horn-growth during succeeding years from the pricket to the fullest development. The buck reaches its complete head in the sixth year, and generally decline sets in after the ninth.

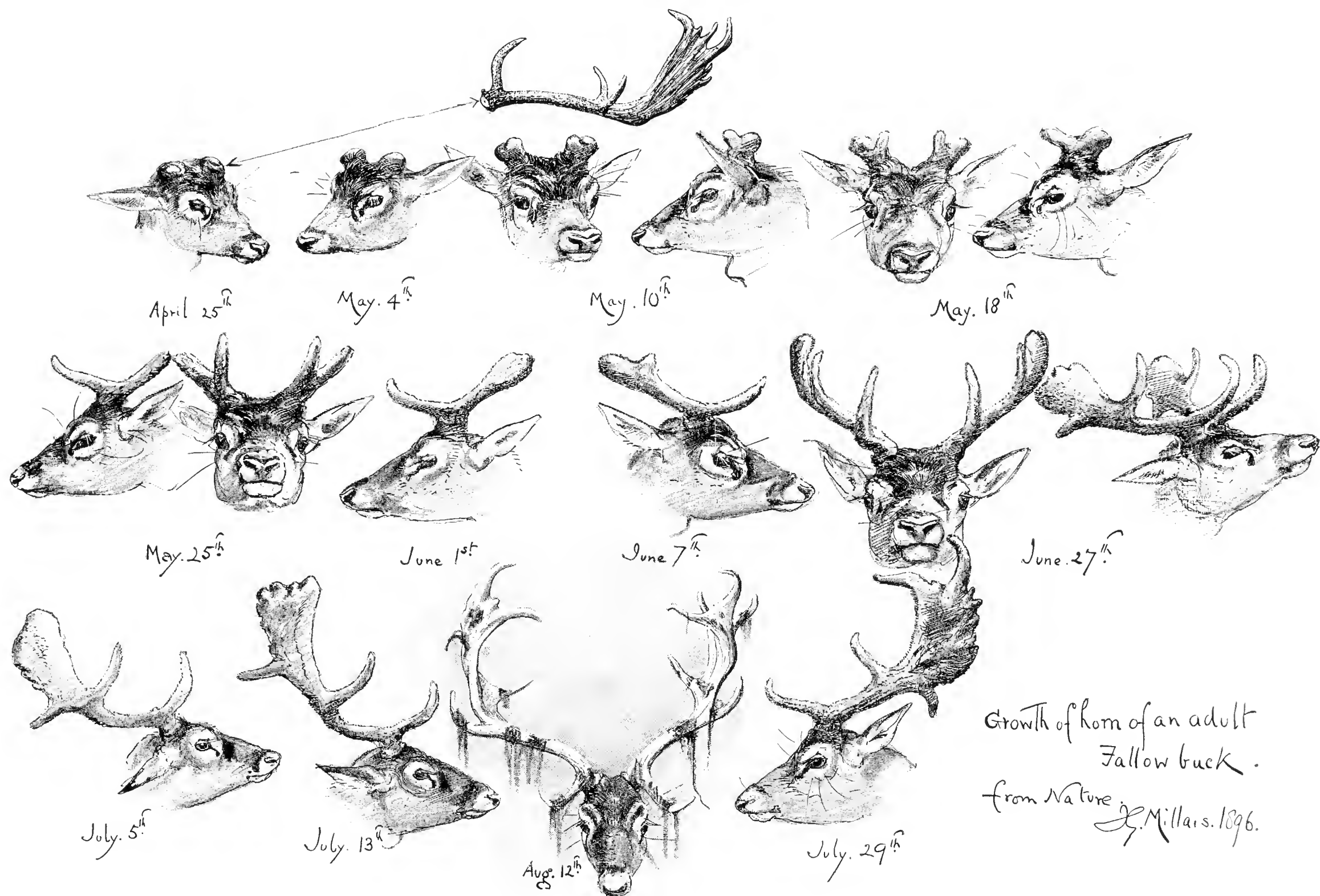
In parks where feeding is good it is quite common to see bucks of the third year with horns on that are typical of a fourth-year beast. In the same way, where the feeding is poor the horn-growth may be arrested.

The fallow buck never has the "bay" tine, but one will often see another little point fully developed at the base of the brow point, but more often it is only rudimentary. It is quite common to see in any park the back point on the head of an adult buck carried away up into the palm, and, with others, forming itself into a collateral branch, as in the case of the New Forest heads, but this, as a rule, only takes place in one horn, the buck having the back tine in its right place on the other one. At Castle Caldwell, however, in Scotland, all the bucks have this development of horn-growth in both horns, palms being split right down the middle.

Having been turned wild so very recently, the wild fallow deer of the Dunkeld district do not grow heads at all different from park deer, but they are shorter, thicker, and not so broad in the palms. The best head I have seen, and, in fact, about the only good one, was on a big buck that had been drowned whilst trying to swim the river above Murthly, and was found by James Miller, the fisherman, who now has it hanging in his house. Unfortunately the rats had got at it and gnawed off a number of points. MacIntosh, the Dowager Duchess of Athole's head keeper, tells me they never carry good trophies. But there are two really fine heads, that is to say for wild ones, in Blair Castle, which were killed near that place about twenty years ago. They measure respectively 27 and 28 inches in length, one of them being 7 inches round the coronet.

Next, to come to what we may almost call semi-feral fallow deer, are those of Drummond

Castle, Perthshire, which are certainly the best fallow bucks, both in body and head, in Scotland. The horns of these bucks present a type which is quite their own, and unlike any other British fallow deer with which I am acquainted. They are very long, averaging 26 to 27 inches, and though not broad in the palm, have generally a beautiful wild spread, which gives them great dignity. The horns themselves, too, are of that beautiful rough and dark quality which we all like to see. The span of one hanging in the armoury at Drummond Castle is truly wonderful, 37 inches, and I very much doubt if it could be exceeded by



Drawn from a buck in Warnham Court. Visits were made every few days, so that the exact amount of new horn put forth during the growth is here noted.

any British fallow deer's head. I give a picture of it with its measurements, as well as some fine heads from the same place in my own collection. The head in the centre of the photograph is 31 inches in length, but it is not particularly good in other respects. It is the longest buck's head I know of, being the same as the big English park head at Colebrooke.

Very few landowners in Ireland keep fallow deer, but there is no doubt that the country is very suitable to fine growth, as we see exemplified in the red deer and roe heads. The best now are those kept by Lord Cloncurry at Hazlebach, County Kildare. Till quite recently a certain number were kept by the late Sir Victor Brooke at Colebrooke, but there are none there now. The measurements of the two best, which are of very fine span, are—

Fallow Deer Horns

163

Length	Span (extreme)	Beam	Palm	Points	
28½	35	4	6	19	Killed 26th August 1873. Seven years old ; as he fell, 237½ lbs. ; 198 lbs. clean.
28	26	4	5	18¹	Killed 19th August 1871. Seven years old ; as he fell, 224 lbs.

and I give a sketch of one of them (p. 165).

There are many parks of course in England, particularly in the south, where fallow bucks carry fine heads, and probably the two where they are uniformly best are Petworth, Lord Leconfield's big park in Sussex, and Ashton Park in Lancashire, the property of Mr.



FALLOW BUCKS' HEADS, WELBECK

Showing the light spotted form on right of picture, pure albino on the left, and intermediate types between them.

Williamson, M.P. Mr. Bishop of Lancaster Gate has two first-class heads from this park, and Mr. Whitaker gave a picture in the *Field* for 27th April 1895 of a fine head from the same place. On the last occasion on which I visited the Petworth herd, in August 1896, in a group of about a hundred adult bucks I saw eight or nine with grand heads, none of which could have been much less than 28 inches in length, and 7 to 8 inches in breadth across the palms, exclusive of course of any points. One day I obtained from Sam Redman, an old whip of the Petworth hounds, a head which he and the keepers said was the best killed during the last twenty years. It is certainly a perfect and typical example of what a fallow

¹ A very curious fact about this buck was that his hardly mature five-year-old dropped horns were superior in every way to those on his head at the time of death, when he was in his prime.

buck's head should be in every way, and is particularly "rough," which is a very rare beauty in a fallow deer. The measurements of this head are as follows :—

Length	Circumference of Beam	Tip to Tip	Spread Inside	Points	Width of Palms
$29\frac{1}{2}$	5	17	$28\frac{1}{2}$	14×13	(R) $7\frac{1}{4}$ and (L) 8

and I give photographs of it from two points of view (p. 168). The weight of the horns on



DRUMMOND CASTLE HEADS

These heads are of remarkable length and span. The specimen in the centre is 31 inches in length (author's collection).

the skull, without the lower jaw, is 8 lbs. 1 oz., while $5\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. would be considered a fair weight for an average adult buck's head. This head, and one now at Colebrooke, which I also figure, are the two best fallow deer heads I have seen. The Colebrooke head¹ is quite as good as mine, has more points, even to the additional ones on top of the brows; it is also an inch and a half longer, but the palms are not quite so broad, nor is the whole

¹ The measurement of this fine head is not in Rowland Ward's book, where it must have been overlooked, as it hangs away in a dark passage apart from all the other fallow heads.

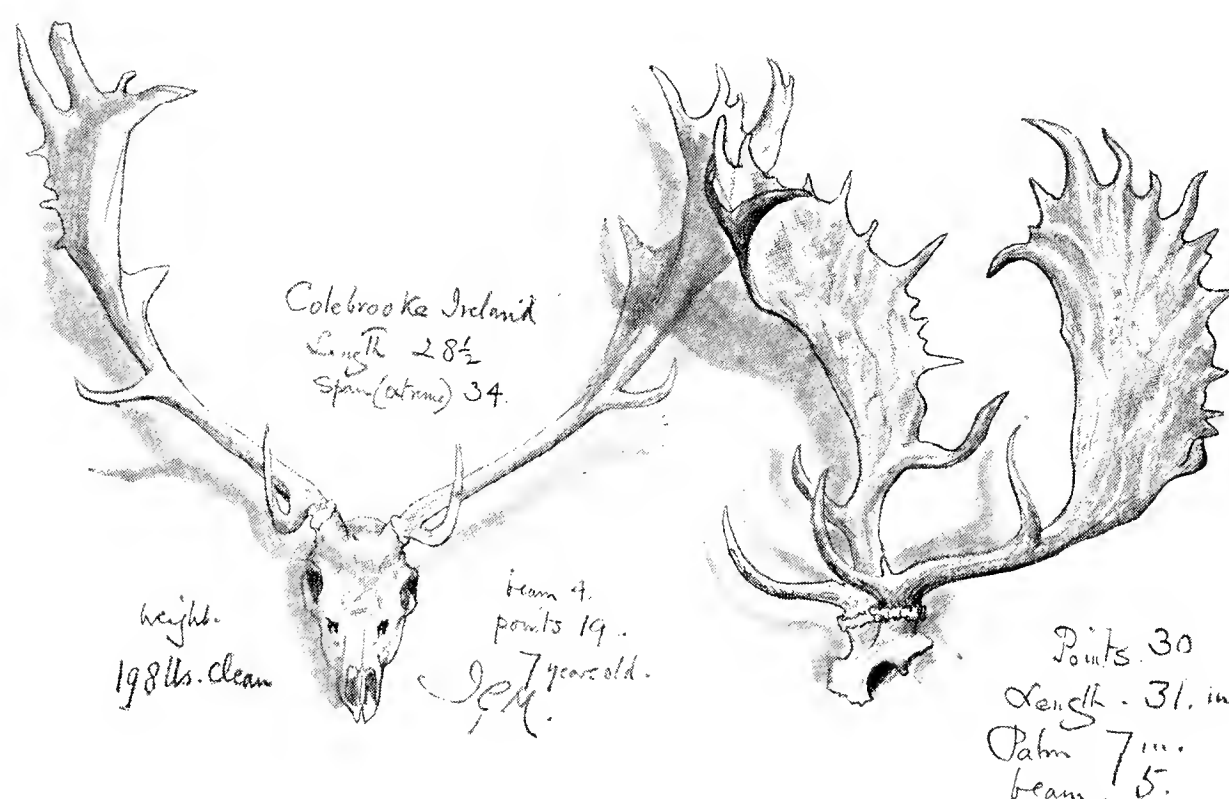
head quite so massive. This grand head was obtained by the late Sir Victor Brooke from Mr. Thomas Grove, the fishmonger in Charing Cross, but unfortunately no record was kept of the park from which it came.

Occasionally the back points become unusually elongated, particularly if the tops have



A HEAD IN THE ARMOURY, DRUMMOND CASTLE, OF REMARKABLE LENGTH AND SPAN

not properly developed. In Mr. Whitaker's head, from Ashton Park, there has been an injury to the right horn on the anterior margin, and this has caused an added amount of horn-



The head on the right is quite perfect in every way. It was bought by the late Sir Victor Brooke from Grove, the fishmonger, but its locality is unknown.

growth to go into the back point, which is 7 inches long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference. There are two fine heads in the servants' hall at Warnham Court, which carry on both horns particularly long back points, measuring $7\frac{1}{4}$ and 8 inches respectively.

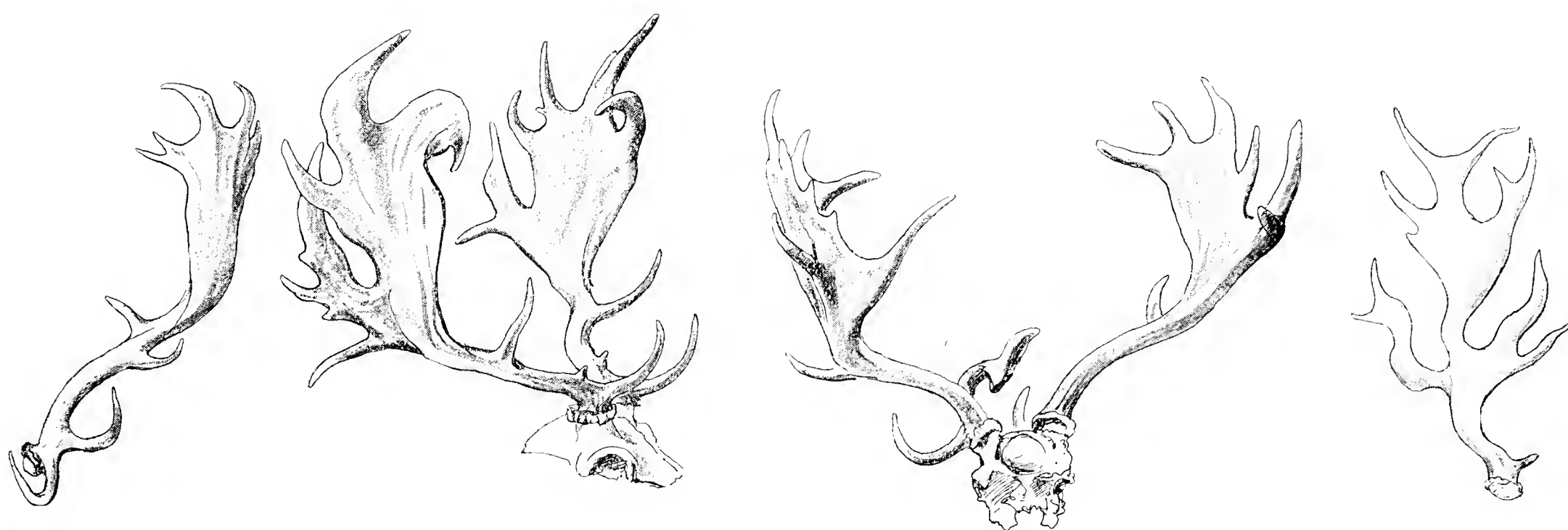
In spite of the enormous number of fallow deer in this country, we hardly ever see a buck's head which has suffered from an injury and then thrown out curious snags and bifurcations from all sorts of queer places, as is frequently the case with red deer, and commonly so

with roe. Certainly fallow deer both can and do take more care of their horns when in the velvet; their trophies are not so much in the way as with the noble stag, and they do not go dashing through timber or running up against wire fences like roe, so that one may see thousands of heads without the slightest abnormality.

Here is a picture of a three-horned fallow buck from Sir Robert Harvey's park near Slough, and I shot a buck in Mr. Lucas's park this autumn (1896) which had both a long snag going out and backwards by the brow point, and had also another point sticking right out of the centre of the palm on the left horn.

In the museum of the Marischal College, Aberdeen, there is the dropped horn of a buck with two perfectly formed brow points, which I think is a great rarity.

I have never seen a fallow doe with horns. In Boughton, the Duke of Buccleuch's place near Kettering, Northamptonshire, there are preserved the heads of two bucks that



1. Cast horn with double brows, Marischal College, Aberdeen. 2. Castle Caldwell head, Sir E. Loder's collection. 3. Head with horn excretion over the left brow and extra point in the palm, author's collection. 4. Curious horn of a hevier, Dalkeith Park, N.B.

had become interlocked and had thus died. This is also extremely rare, on account of the regular formation of the antlers. Mr. Harting tells me he once came across a couple of bucks thus entangled, and it was not until the horns were sawn off by the keeper that the deer could be released.

We all know the curious effects of castration on horn-growth, particularly if the operation is only partially effected. Mr. Chonler, the head keeper at Dalkeith, tells me that a hevier in that park grew a single horn $35\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, but it always remained soft. It was round, similar to a stag's, with five points. Another threw out a solid horn which cleaned, with points springing in the most curious manner from both sides. I give a sketch of it on this page.

If a buck is cut when his horns are off, he is said never to renew them, but I am not quite sure whether this is always the case. If he is operated upon when the horns are on, he will not shed them as a rule, but there is sometimes a tendency for a growth to come from the pedicle at the commencement of the next horn-growing season. I have made inquiries as to the effect of cutting a buck when the horns are in the velvet, but apparently in some cases the velvet is never shed, and the blood goes on distributing

itself through the vessels, whilst in others the horn dries up and cleans in the same way as any other buck's.

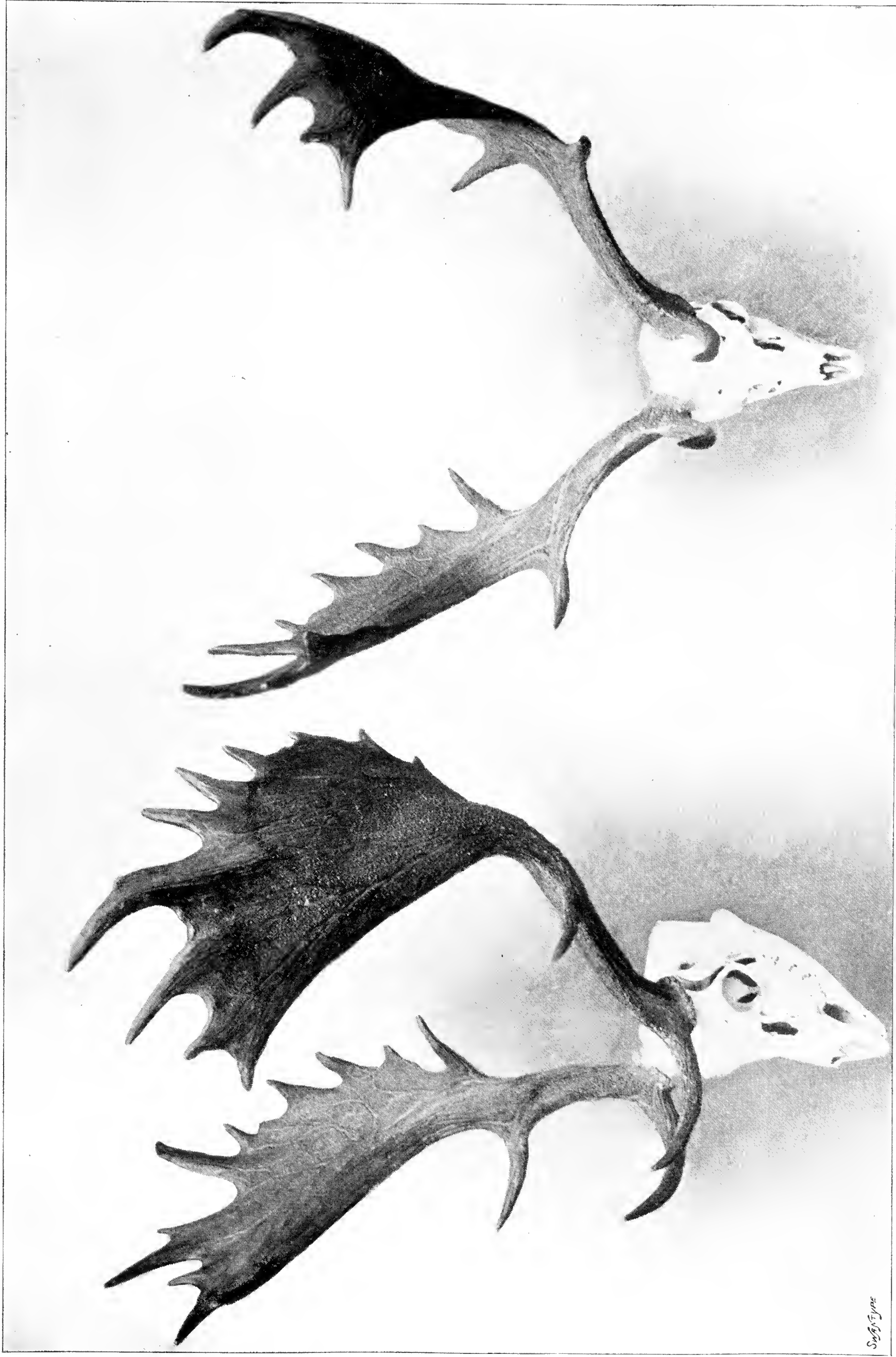
Many of our oldest and most interesting customs have gone from us, but here is a relic of days gone by, when our forefathers galloped through the forest and chased the stags and fallow bucks with horse and hound. The excellent photograph of the horn dance, which Mr. A. Edwards of Uttoxeter kindly sends me, gives one some idea of a



FALLOW BUCK'S HEAD WITH THREE HORNS¹
In the possession of Sir Robert Harvey, Bart., Langley Park, Slough.

strange old custom still carried on every September at Abbots-Bromley, a village on the borders of Needwood Forest in Staffordshire. What one cannot understand is how the heads of reindeer came to be substituted for those of stags or fallow bucks, and I can get no local information on the subject. From the old histories it is certain that stags' and fallow bucks' heads were what were carried by the dancers, and there is nothing to show when or why reindeer's heads were substituted. The following account of the horn or "hobby-horse" dance is taken from the *History of Staffordshire*, by William White:—
"A remarkable custom called the 'hobby-horse dance' was practised here yearly till

¹ Another head almost exactly similar to this one is in the ranger's lodge, Richmond Park.



A TYPICAL FALLOW BUCK'S HEAD, PETWORTH PARK, SUSSEX (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)

Length, $29\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; circumference, 5 in. ; tip to tip, 17 in. ; spread inside, $28\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; points, 27 ; width of palms, $7\frac{1}{4}$ and 8 in. ; weight, skull and horns, without lower jaw, 8 lbs. 1 oz.

the close of the seventeenth century. It was a sort of amusement which the inhabitants celebrated at Christmas or New Year's Day. On these occasions a person danced through the principal streets carrying between his legs the figure of a horse composed of thin boards. In his hand he bore a bow and arrow, which last entered a hole in the bow, and stopping on a shoulder, it made a sort of snapping noise as he drew it to and fro, keeping



THE HORN DANCE

A mediæval custom still kept up at Needwood Forest, Staffordshire. From a photo by A. Edwards, Uttoxeter.

time with the music. Five or six other individuals danced along with this person, each carrying on his shoulder a reindeer's head, three of them painted white and three red, with the arms of the chief families who had at different times been proprietors of the manor painted on the palms of them."

Mr. Edwards informs me that the heads and horns in the photograph are the original ones, and are kept in the church, being the property of the vicar for the time being. In former times a potful of cakes and ale was an appanage of the dance, and contributions for the church repairs and the poor were levied on all spectators.

CHAPTER IX

ROE DEER

WE can fairly guess by the remains left to us of the Pleistocene mammals that they were in every respect finer than their descendants of to-day. Yet on overlooking the remains of roe found in the Norfolk forest-bed, the brick-earths of the Thames valley, the fens of the east coast, and certain caverns, the English animal of those days was certainly not superior to its descendants of to-day. Amongst their horns and skulls in the British Museum there is nothing that would pass as those of a first-class roe of to-day. This is certainly surprising when we consider how the red deer have deteriorated, and I certainly entertained till the year 1892 the belief that Pleistocene roe all over Great Britain were even inferior to modern roe, but in that year I obtained in the north of Scotland the single horn and part of the skull of a roe dug out of the peat moss at Alness, in Ross-shire (Fig. 4, p. 171), which indicated that it had belonged to a really larger type of animal. And again in 1894 I received from Perth a still more remarkable horn, attached to the skull in the same way. It had been found in the Tay valley, and evidently at a greater depth, though I could not obtain exact particulars (Fig. 5, p. 171). For the benefit of the student I give a photograph of these two fine horns, which are 11 and $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length respectively, with the brow points of 5 and $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches, together with what would be considered nowadays a good adult buck's horn, as well as an exceptional Scotch horn, and one of the massive, big, coronated horns from Lissadell, Sligo, Ireland, which Sir Henry Gore Booth has kindly sent me.

Curiously enough, the roe was unknown in Ireland during Pleistocene times. Nowadays the only place where they are kept is at Lissadell; here they are a recent introduction. There is little doubt that the mild climate and abundant feeding are entirely suitable to them, whilst the grass grown on a limestone formation has the effect of producing fine horn-growth. I shall refer further to their heads in the next chapter. Formerly there were roe at Colebrooke, but how they became extinct there I have not heard.

In England there are still a few roe found in Cumberland and Northumberland, though they appear to be on the decrease. In Wales they were supposed to have lingered as late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and Mr. G. Assheton-Smith told me he had recently introduced them into Vaynol Park, but that he considered them delicate and hard to acclimatise. In Dorsetshire they were introduced into the Blackmoor Vale country by the

grandfather of the present Earl of Ilchester, and when I visited the neighbourhood in 1896 I learned that they were well on the increase. Here it was that in 1884, under the direction of Mr. Harting, eight roe were caught and transported to Epping Forest, where they were turned out, for the species had long been extinct there. At the latest count (1896) these animals had increased to thirteen.

There are a few roe in the woods by Virginia Water, as well as at Petworth in Sussex, and there were certainly some in the heather and fir country near Swinley in Surrey as late as 1894, for Mr. Garth's hounds killed two bucks in that year, whilst another was seen. There are also some in the New Forest.

It is scarcely necessary to enumerate all the districts in Scotland north of the Tweed



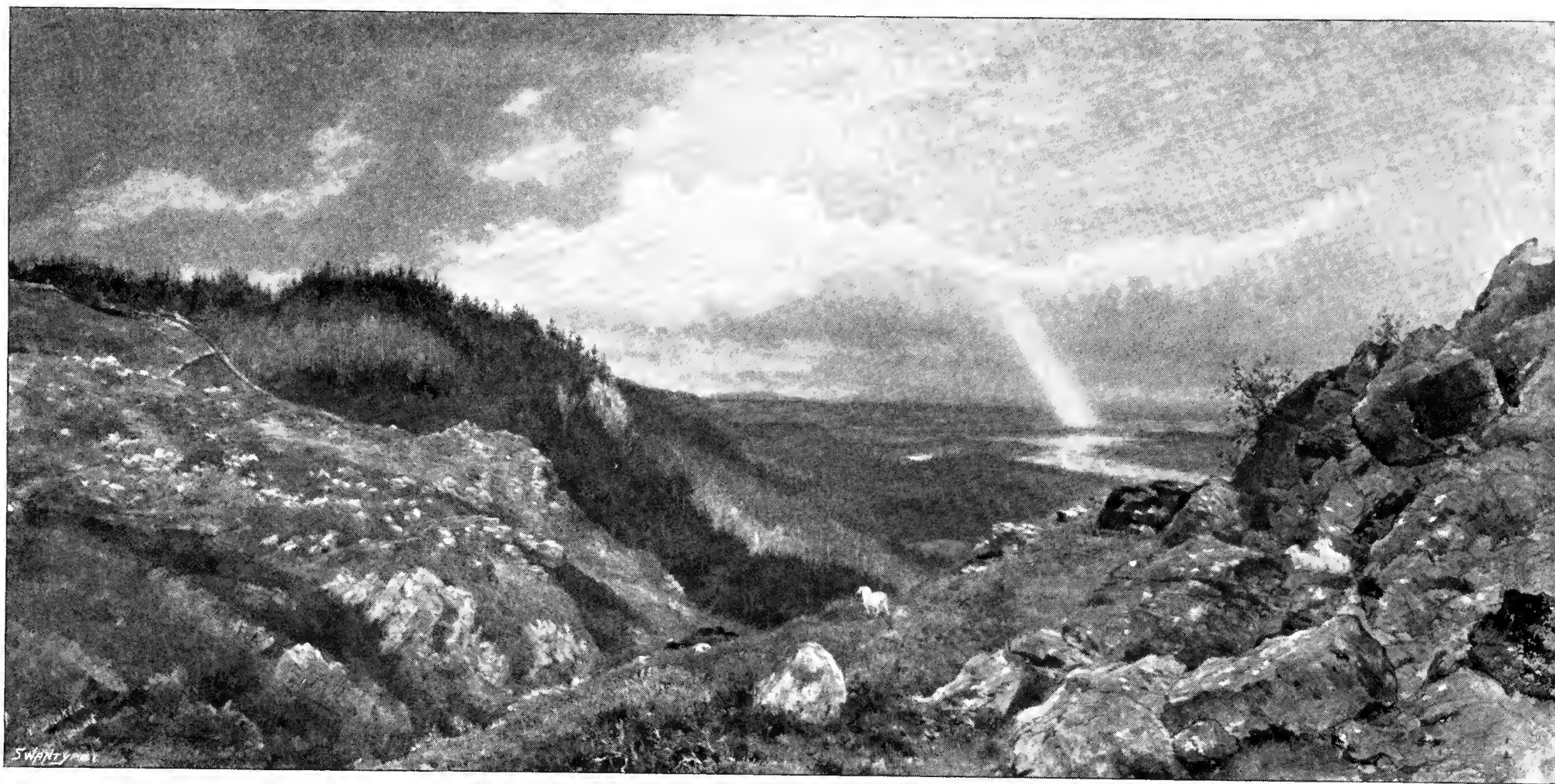
1. A good Scotch horn, length $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. 2. A very good Scotch horn, length $10\frac{1}{2}$ in.; brow point, $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. 3. A massive Irish horn, length 9 in.; coronet, 9 in., Lissadell, Sligo. 4. Pleistocene roe, Alness, Ross-shire (peat), length 11 in.; brow, 5 in.; top back point, 5 in. 5. Pleistocene roe (gravel), Perth, length $11\frac{1}{2}$ in.; brow, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.

and the Clyde where roe are found, for they occur throughout the whole of the north where the ground is suitable. The actual districts where roe are at their best in Scotland are within circuits drawn with a radius of 15 miles from the towns of Perth, Forres, and Beaulieu. Within these three circles are situated the biggest woods in Scotland, and as their undergrowth and pasture furnish both good cover and good feeding, the roe here reach their best both in body and horn.

From Perth itself there is a continuous chain of low-ground woods bordering on cultivation both west and north. One almost continuous forest passes up the valley of the Earn, comprising the woods of Dupplin, Trinity-Gask, Gask, Strathallan, Balgowan, Foulis-Wester, Methven, and right on to Crieff. Another forest practically extends up the Tay valley with few breaks to Blair. I have shot in these two districts for many years, and have

noticed how gradually both the roe and their heads deteriorate as one moves north; particularly so is there a marked change between bucks killed in the low-ground woods of Stanley, Scone, and Black Park, and those killed on the heather grounds north of Murthly, only 7 miles distant. Murthly itself is partly heather ground and partly low ground, and it is quite possible to recognise the two types of bucks which exist there, those that had worked in from Strathord and the south being far superior to those from Rohallion and Dunkeld way.

About Forres there are the grand woods of Darnaway, Cawdor, Burgie, Westerton, Altyre, etc., which are all full of roe. In the big wood round Cawdor Castle there are



DUNKELD WOODS AND THE VALLEY OF THE TAY

From a water-colour by William Millais.

probably to-day more roe than in any other wood of its size in Scotland, not even excepting Farley.

In Beaully district there are many roe in the big woods on the sides of the river up to Strathglass and Guisachan. Starting from Beaully itself, there is the beautiful Beaufort estate, on which there were, till recently, more roe than in any other estate in Scotland. Here is the famous Farley wood, where probably more roe have been killed than in any one wood in the North.

On Beaufort too are the two other great woods of Boblainey and Altnacliach, where a large number of roe can still be killed. Moniack and Clunes, in this district, are also good for roe, whilst up Strathconon and Dingwall way all the woods used to hold a good number of fine roe.

In Mull they were introduced in 1865, and are now thriving there.

The distribution of roe in the south of Scotland is not nearly so well known, so it is necessary to particularise more. There were no roe, at any rate till recently, in either Berwickshire or Roxburghshire, and though some appeared in Selkirkshire, on the Duke

of Buccleuch's ground, they were killed off, as they interfered with the foxhounds. They are plentiful in Peeblesshire, and particularly so in Dumfriesshire. In Wigtownshire they are also numerous, particularly in the Newton-Stewart and Monreith country. All these south-country roe are said to owe their existence to some which were reintroduced by the first Marquis of Ailsa at the beginning of the present century at his estate Culzean Castle, Maybole. These few deer, introduced by him in fifty years, increased to such an alarming



ROHALLION WOODS (PERTHSHIRE), THE ANCIENT HUNTING GROUND FOR ROE OF THE KINGS OF SCOTLAND
From a photograph by Geoffrey Millais.

extent that they became quite a plague, and orders were given for their entire extermination. In one year this was to a large extent carried out by Lord David Kennedy, who was one of the finest rifle-shots of his day, and is still alive and hearty. There is no doubt that within the first year an enormous number of roe were killed on the Culzean estate, and Lord David says he is well within the mark when he states that between six and seven hundred roe were killed within the first twelve months of the shooting. He himself, strolling about the glades and the edges of the woods, often killed six and seven good bucks in an evening; and the present Marquis of Ailsa, in a letter to me, states, "When I was a child I can remember that enormous quantities of roe deer used to exist here. They had to be killed

down in my father's time on account of the great damage they did to the young plantations, and the numbers killed in the first few months were *something fabulous*."

The largest number of roe I have myself seen in one day was in a big wood round Cawdor Castle in 1891. For the first time for many years the undergrowth had all been cut away, and the roe, which were extremely numerous, would not even then leave the wood. I was out at daybreak, and soon after leaving the Castle with Sutherland, the head keeper, we saw no less than six bucks all together, standing by the "rings," which I shall presently describe. Every few minutes we saw, as we moved about,—and we could see everything within 200 yards,—the roe making off, and by ten o'clock we estimated that we had observed for certain at least fifty roe. On a higher part of the ground, later on in



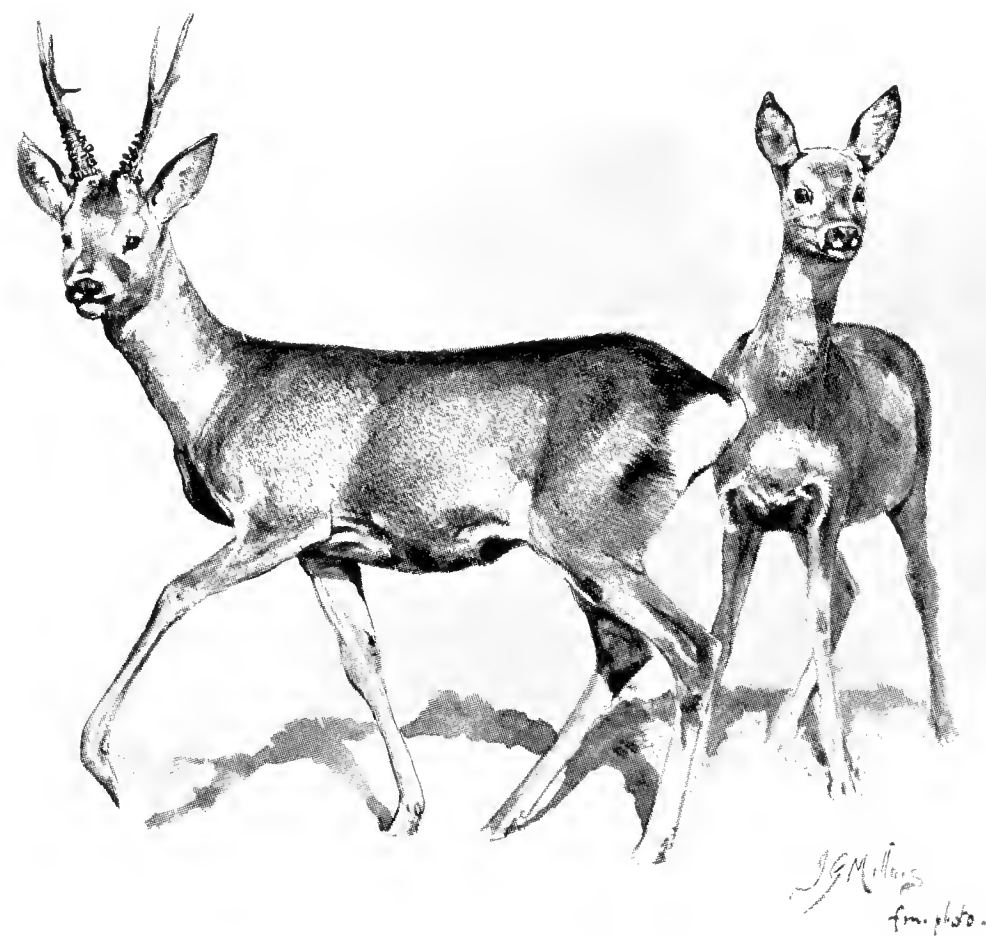
FEEDING ON THE ROWAN BERRIES

the day, I must have seen some twenty more. Very properly the roe at Cawdor are never much harassed, and the ground does not seem to become stale to them, as it does in so many places. Till 1892 more roe could be doubtless shot on Beaufort than on any other estate, but now they are sadly on the decrease there. The following few statistics may be interesting to sportsmen. The late C. Macpherson Grant, who had the autumn shooting of Beaufort for two years, told me that he and his party in one day in Farley Wood, Beaufort, killed sixty-five roe, besides thirteen hinds and thirteen woodcock. Fifty have several times been killed in the same wood by the late Lord Lovat and his parties, and so far as I recollect, Johnny Ross, the stalker on Altnacliach and Boblainey beats, told me that thirty-five had been killed in a day's shooting there. There are a great number of roe in that wood, but it is terribly rough both to walk and to beat.

In Westerton wood, between Elgin and Forres, as many as forty roe have been killed in

a day, in Foulis-Wester over thirty, and I have seen many roe there. At Rohallion,¹ in Perthshire, which, by the way, was for several centuries the main hunting ground for roe of the kings of Scotland, I have seen twenty killed in a day; and there are several of the big woods on the Duke of Athole's and the Earl of Mansfield's estates in Perthshire where this number are killed in a day every year.

No British animal has received less attention at the hands of the naturalist than the roe. In what are called standard works he is dismissed with a few lines, and interesting notes on his natural history in the columns of even a paper like the *Field* are few and far between. I therefore take up the pen with a certain amount of confidence, knowing that I am traversing ground that has been practically untouched. The roe has always been a great favourite with



ROE STARTLED

me, and having lived for most of my life by his haunts, I have perhaps enjoyed more opportunities of closely studying the animal than most naturalists.

There are many points about the natural history of the roe that differ considerably from those of the fallow and red deer, particularly so in the case of his breeding habits. In days gone by certainly both sportsmen and naturalists must have been singularly unobservant not to have known with certainty the time at which roe paired, for it was practically only recently that the exact period of the year was ascertained. This is only one point, however; for their fighting habits, which I know take place at *two seasons*, and their pseudo-erotic tendencies are all very curious.

Roe are commonly found in small parties of from two to six, and are never gregarious in the strict sense of the word, yet in places where they are unusually numerous and in big woods it is not uncommon to see more than this together.

I have previously mentioned seeing six bucks all together one morning at Cawdor, and at Murthly I have seen twenty of both sexes in one herd, but this must be very uncommon.

In the heavily-wooded parts of Scotland, where there is no open forest for the roe to

¹ Rohallion, literally the head of the roe.

work out to, they are obliged more or less to stick to the woods all the year round, and only emerge from them at night or in the early morning to pass from one cover to another or graze in the open spaces. In most parts of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire many of the best roe grounds adjoin either deer forests or sheep grounds, and to these open and greater elevations many roe make an annual migration, often to the very summits of the highest mountains. Roe are much worried with the flies and midges in July, August, and September, and probably for this reason as much as any other do they make for the higher and cooler grounds; here they often stay, singly or in pairs, till the first chills of autumn warn them it is time to return to the woods.

It is only under the constant presence of danger that an animal puts forth all its powers of self-preservation, and to sum up the character of the roe from our acquaintance with it as a purely wood-loving species would be entirely superficial. The way to estimate roe character is to study him in open ground, when we can see everything that he does, and where his

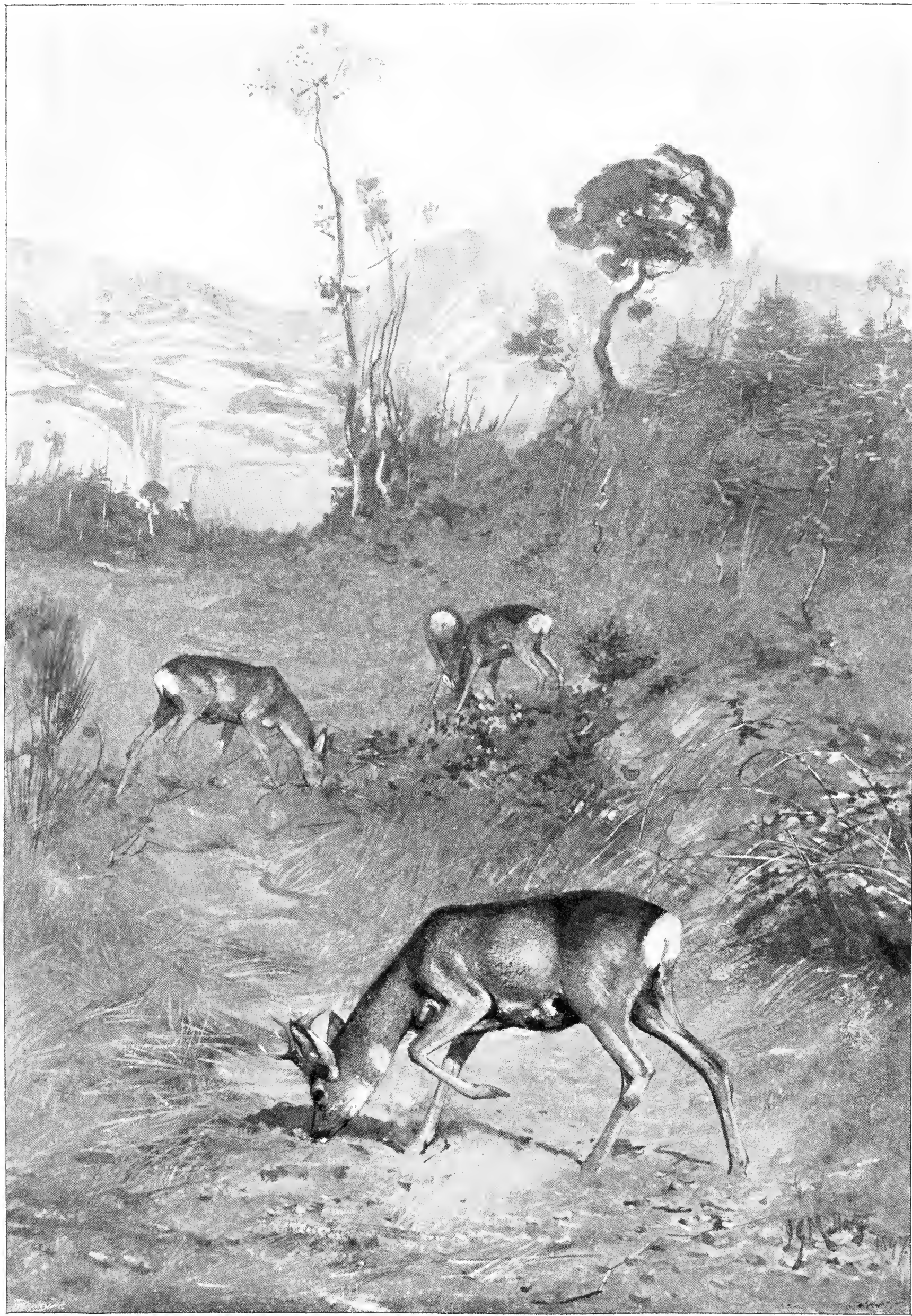


ATTITUDES OF A ROEBUCK AT BAY

senses are strung to a higher pitch of alertness and cunning. It is the opinion of the best wood-stalker that I have met, Johnny Ross of Kiltarlity, in the service of Lord Lovat, that the sight of an adult roebuck *who has been stalked once or twice* is much *quicker* than that of a stag, and in that I entirely agree with him. His hearing is equally acute and his nose quite as sensitive to detect the presence of man, though I doubt if roe can take the wind at such a very great distance as red deer will.

Roe generally keep in their family parties till the beginning or middle of May, according to the season, when the troop splits up, the old doe or does going off with their last year's calves, though they too soon leave their mothers, whilst the bucks travel off by themselves, and from this season to July, when they have picked up new wives or come back to their old ones (who seldom shift their ground much), they often go great distances.

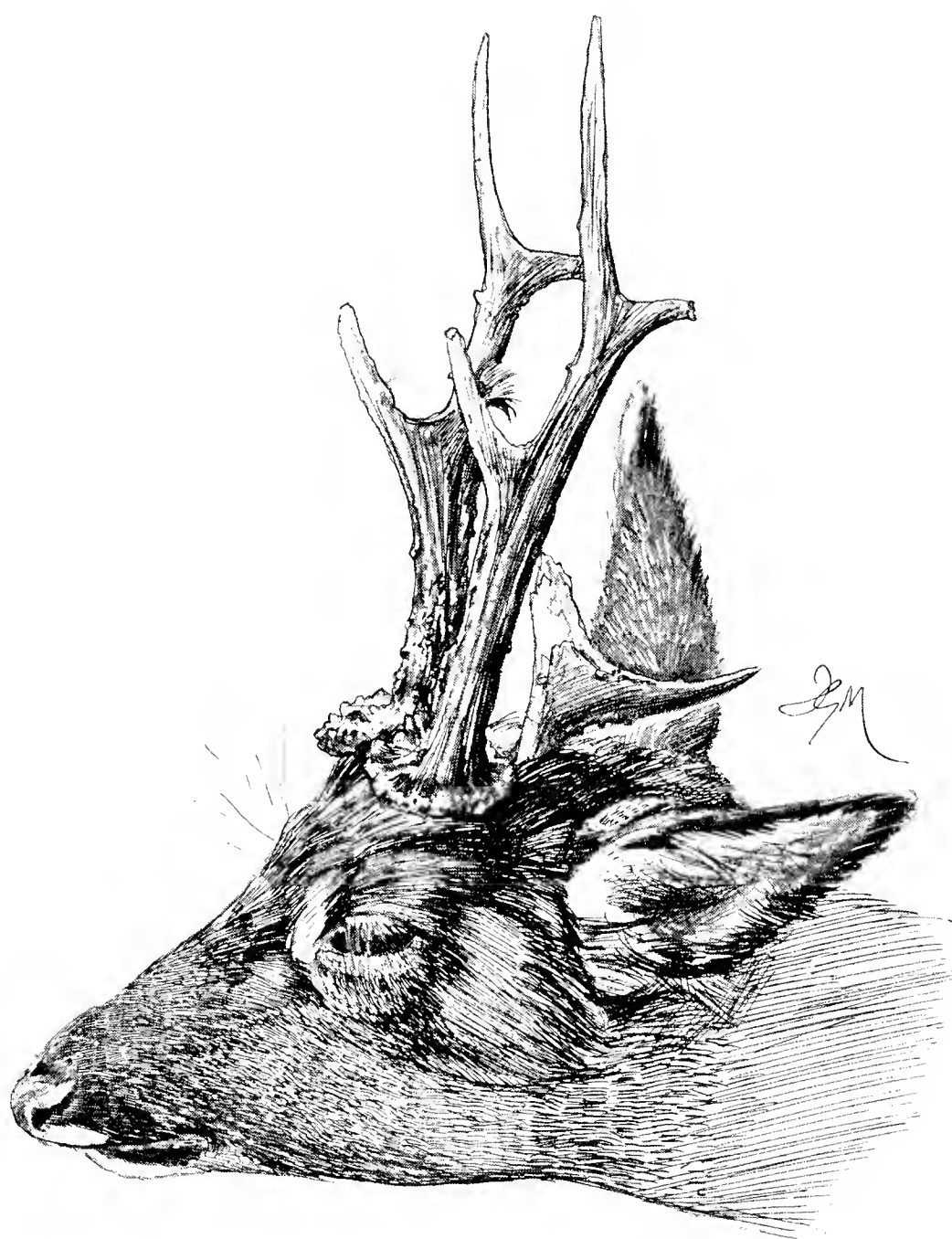
Though not generally known, I am sure that some at any rate of the bucks fight at this season. Several observant keepers have told me so, and I have once seen them at it myself, and the following interesting letter from Colonel M'Inroy appeared in the *Field* in 1894.



DIGGING OUT FUNGI



A MORTAL COMBAT BETWEEN ROEBUCKS.—On 29th April a roebuck was found lying dead in the woods here, evidently killed in a fight with another buck a few days previously. The ground all round for some considerable distance was trampled down, marks of where one or both combatants had fallen were numerous, and much hair lay scattered about. But the immediate cause of death was the curious feature of the case. Immediately behind the base of the horns, which were still in (dry) velvet, striking right through the skull to, presumably, the brain, and to a depth of $1\frac{7}{8}$ inch, was imbedded the horn of the victor, broken off below the divergence of the posterior tine. The battle must have been over, and the defeated buck prostrate on the ground, before such a blow could have been struck, the force of which can be imagined when it penetrated the skull sufficiently to prevent withdrawal and cause the conqueror to break off his horn. Not the least curious circumstance is that the bucks should have been fighting at all



HEAD OF A ROEBUCK KILLED WHILST FIGHTING

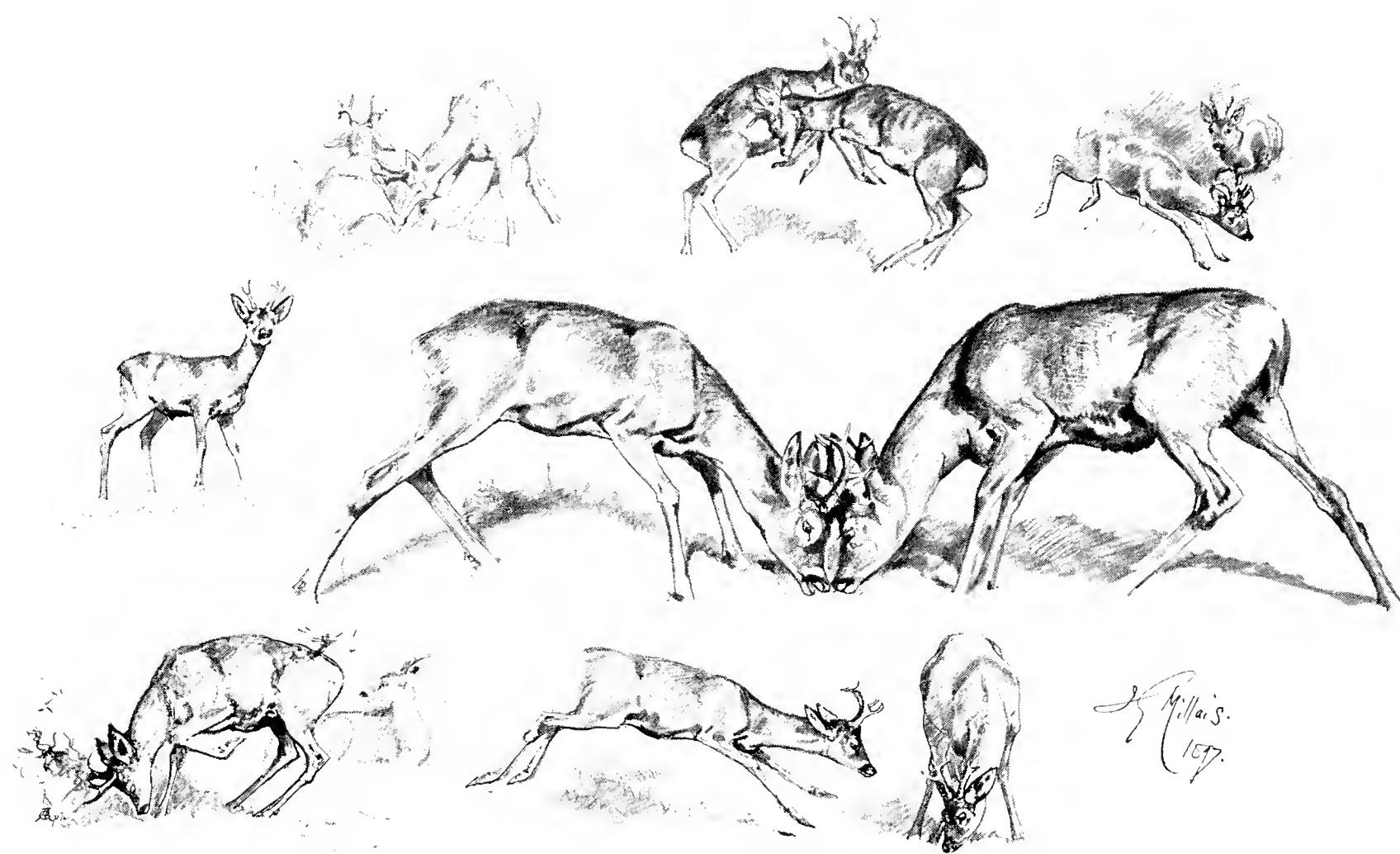
The upper portion of the adversary's horn is still seen imbedded in the back of the skull as when found. Owner, Colonel M'Inroy.

at this season. The dead roe was a well-grown animal, probably three years old, and in excellent condition. The horn which killed him, although not so long, was more massive than his own.—CHAS. M'INROY, Colonel (The Burn, Brechin).

Colonel M'Inroy was kind enough to send me the head of the vanquished buck with the horn of the victor still buried in its skull, and of it I append a drawing. He also sent me the skull and horns of another buck which, without doubt, was the short-lived victor. The point of one of the horns was broken off, and the break exactly corresponded with that left in the skull of the buck that was first found. There is little doubt that, as the Colonel said, the fight must have been a most savage one, since both animals had succumbed in it. Johnny Ross was witness to an attack by two young bucks on a so-called *perruque*-headed buck which lived for some time at Beaufort; the time was the end of April, and he saw the

two youngsters going for the big buck most savagely, and repeatedly hitting him in the sides. On his approach the two assailants made off, but presently returned after he had left the scene, and finished off their object of aversion. When Ross found the dead buck, whose head he gave me, and which I afterwards gave to C. Macpherson Grant, he described the body as being literally a mass of stabs all over.

The season when roe ordinarily fight is of course in July and August, but it is distinctly rare to see them do so. In fact, I think roe have an aversion to fighting, nor is it generally necessary, as they only require one mate apiece, and they know where to find her. When, however, they do come to blows they are most savage and determined in their conflicts. The fight generally begins with a charge at each other and the usual fencing with the heads, which, by the way, are kept *very low*, almost touching the ground. They frequently draw back, and



ROEBUCKS FIGHTING

making a pounce forward, *endeavour to pin each other to the ground*. This seems to be the roebuck's main method of attack. If you go into a pen, or put a dog in with a roebuck, he will do just the same. Another attitude when he is fighting is to get on his hind legs like a goat and try to strike his adversary, also standing up, with an upper cut under the flank.

A roebuck at the season of love and war displays an even greater amount of savagery, if he thinks there is another buck about, than a stag does. He will thrash a bush or a peat-hag all to pieces in his blind fury, and seems to lose all self-control. I was stalking at Guisachan in August 1891, and was coming home one evening without having had a shot all day. Some sweet creatures on Mr. Winans's ground had, with unsportsmanlike conduct which is happily rare in the Highlands, purposely scared the stag I was stalking on Lord Tweedmouth's ground. There was one bit of ground called the "Green Corrie" on our way home in which a good stag often dwelt, but my companion said there was little chance of getting a shot there if a certain roebuck was on the hill-side to the north, for he invariably discovered the stalkers before the stags were aware of their presence and gave the alarm. I was



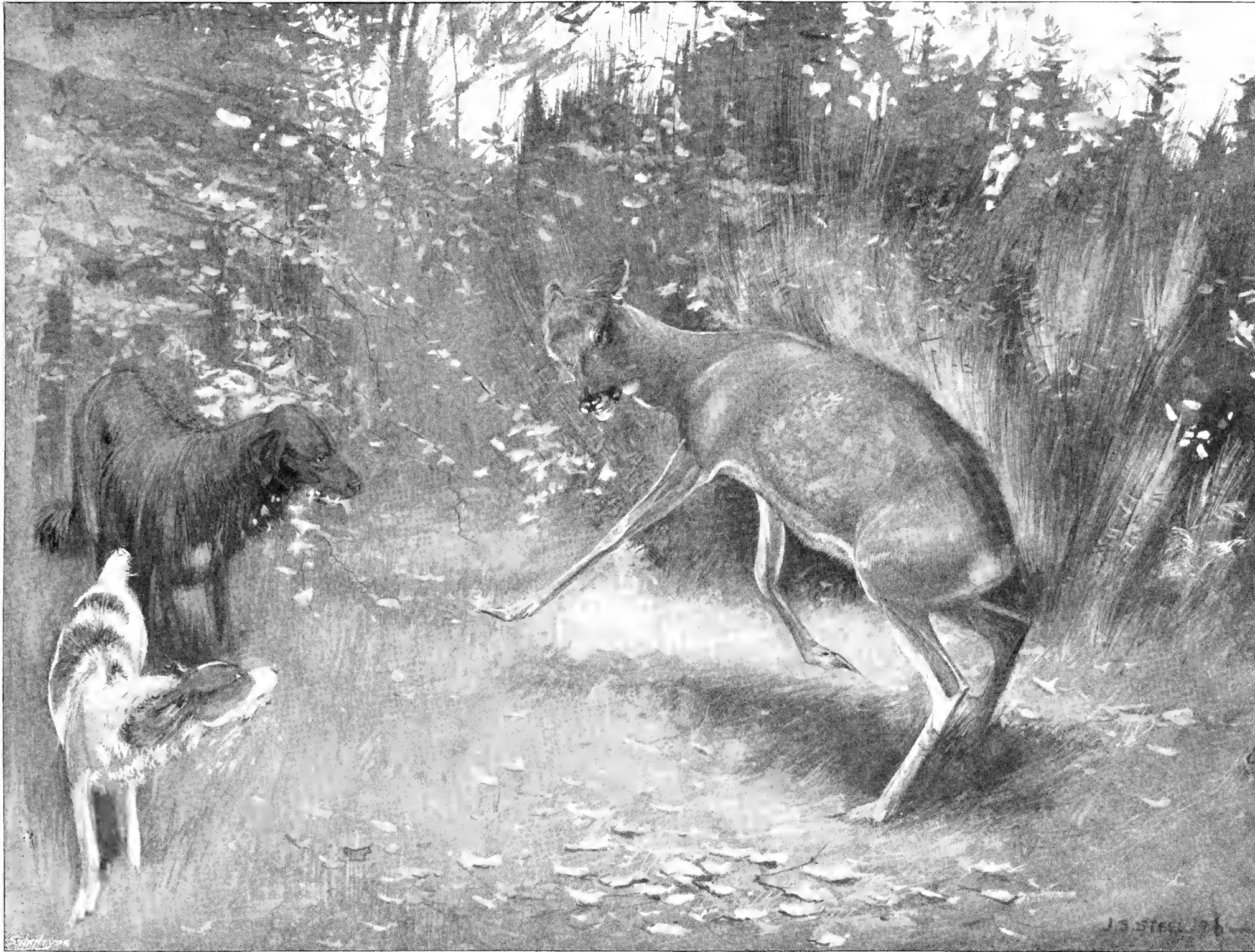
Swan Electric Engraving Co.

Reindeer Herd on the Tule, Feb. 1893.

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naturally interested, particularly as he said that the roe had been there every year with his wife for the last three years and had spoilt many a stalk, nor would he ever place his own skin in danger. We had proceeded with caution more than half-way down the corrie without seeing anything, when, on the sky-line over a shoulder on the opposite hill, I saw some tufts of peat and grass being thrown into the air. Crawling forward carefully, we saw the old roebuck standing beside an isolated hummock of peat, which he was doing his very best to demolish. We watched him with interest for fully ten minutes, and if that imaginary



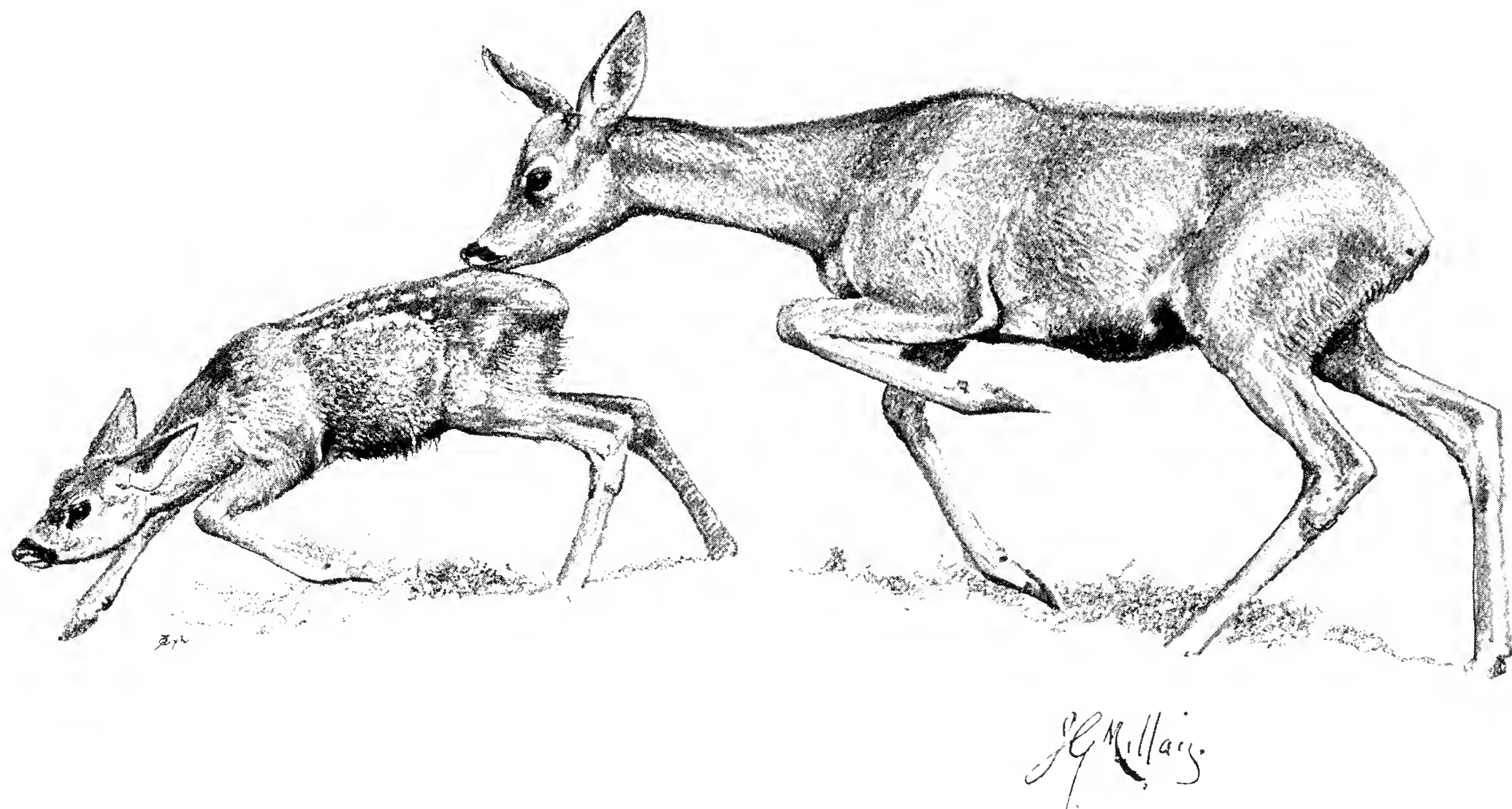
ATTITUDE OF A ROE DEFENDING HERSELF

foe had been alive he would have been dead, as the Irishman would say. There was not another beast in the corrie, and my companion was most anxious to have him in the larder, so, getting an easy chance, I shot him. He was a very large buck, and, what I have not seen before, his horns were worn entirely smooth on the outsides from the rough usage he had given them.

When wounded and brought to bay by a dog, a roebuck brings into play both head and forelegs in his defence, using his horns as described and striking out with his legs, more as if to push off his antagonist than to cause a forcible blow, for he gives no shock, as a hind can. A doe too uses her forelegs and boxes with her head, and Mr. Steel, who has had a wide experience in roe-shooting, tells me that he has seen a doe use her hind legs as well.

Roe shed their winter coats at the beginning of May, but are frequently not in full red till the end of June. They are tolerably regular in this, but in the shedding of this red coat for the winter one they are most irregular. As a rule the dark thick coat is not fully developed till the middle of October, but I have seen in Perthshire the red all off by the beginning of September. In the north, however, they are generally a month later. In 1896 I had an interesting letter from Mr. H. Brinsley-Brooke, who, following the tastes of his father and uncle, both well-known sportsmen and naturalists, dearly loves, rifle in hand, to pursue the roe. The following extract shows that in Speyside also the bucks cast early sometimes.

Early in September 1894 I was out in a wood at Ballindalloch stalking for roe and saw two bucks having what was probably merely a friendly sparring match. They were in an open place on a hill-side

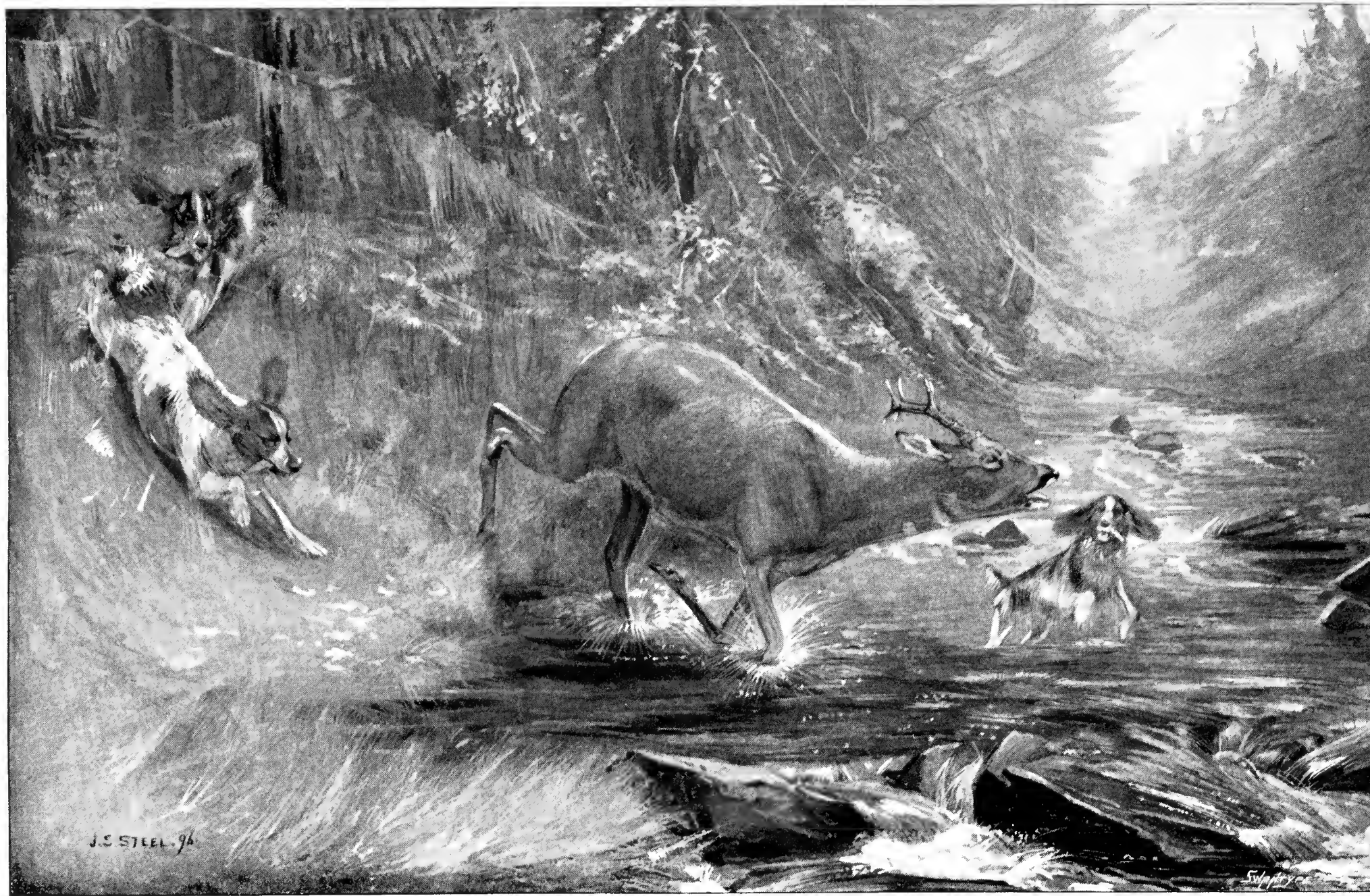


ROE FORCING HER FAWN TO LIE DOWN WHEN SHE HAS APPREHENDED DANGER

above the wood, and there was no doe to be seen anywhere near. Though I had only two days before seen, in the same wood, a buck accompanied by a doe, both in the reddest of summer coats (in fact, all the roe I had seen during the week's stalking were still so dressed), yet these two gentlemen were both as dark-coloured as one would expect to find them at Christmas time.

In the first week in June the doe that is about to bring forth selects some little birch clump, or perhaps small wood where there is good feeding close by, and makes it her home for the next three months. Her two little fawns, for she generally has two, and never three, are born regularly in the first week in June. John Ross, whom I frequently quote in these pages as an authority, has seen calves on the 26th May, but never earlier. The roe doe goes forty weeks in young, and with regard to her gestation I am sorry that I can say nothing new. The question of the suspension of the uterus has occupied the attention of the German naturalists Dr. Pockles and Dr. Ziegler, but beyond knowing that the fœtus

lies in a dormant state till December, when it develops and passes through the usual stages, there is little more to be said. Roe fawns are beautiful little creatures in the first few days of their lives, and are tended with the greatest care by their mother, whose perceptive faculties at this season now become highly developed. The little ones suck frequently, and I am sure obtain only a very small drop of milk at a time, but nevertheless grow quickly. This is a thing to be remembered in rearing roe calves; nine caretakers out of ten kill their little charges by over-kindness, giving them repeated quantities of strong, rich cow's milk.



THE BURN BY THE MARCH

This soon produces indigestion, and they die at once. Goat's milk is the best, and even it should be diluted, and very small quantities given at frequent intervals.

The cunning displayed by the mother at this season is often very interesting to observe. I was waiting in 1891 with Ross at Kiltarlity for a good buck to come out of a wood one evening; the doe had come out and had been pottering around in front of us with her calves for nearly an hour. Till then the wind had been all right, and she betrayed no signs of alarm, but a puff of the tainted atmosphere must have been borne to her on some back eddy, for we witnessed a most interesting display of female unselfishness on her part in the care of her children. Without giving us to understand that she had twigged our presence, I saw her distinctly go up to the calf nearest her, and pressing it down over the stern with her chin, she forced it into a lying position in some bracken. Here it lay concealed, and, seeming to understand, never moved again. Then, without hurry, she went after the other calf, who was a little distance away; but this little fellow was enjoying his dinner

too much, and, refusing to be made to squat, galloped away from her in a circle. She, however, followed close above him, and I saw her pressing again and again with her chin until the second little beast was forced to the ground, where she kept him down for a few seconds and then left him. The clever mother then ran a few yards towards us, cocked her ears, emitted a loud bark, and proceeded to gallop away as hard as she could into the cover as if her fear was only for herself.

Roe fawns change their juvenile coats in September, and are clothed in the full winter coats of their parents in October.

One of the many curious facts of roe natural history is that the rut does not take place, as

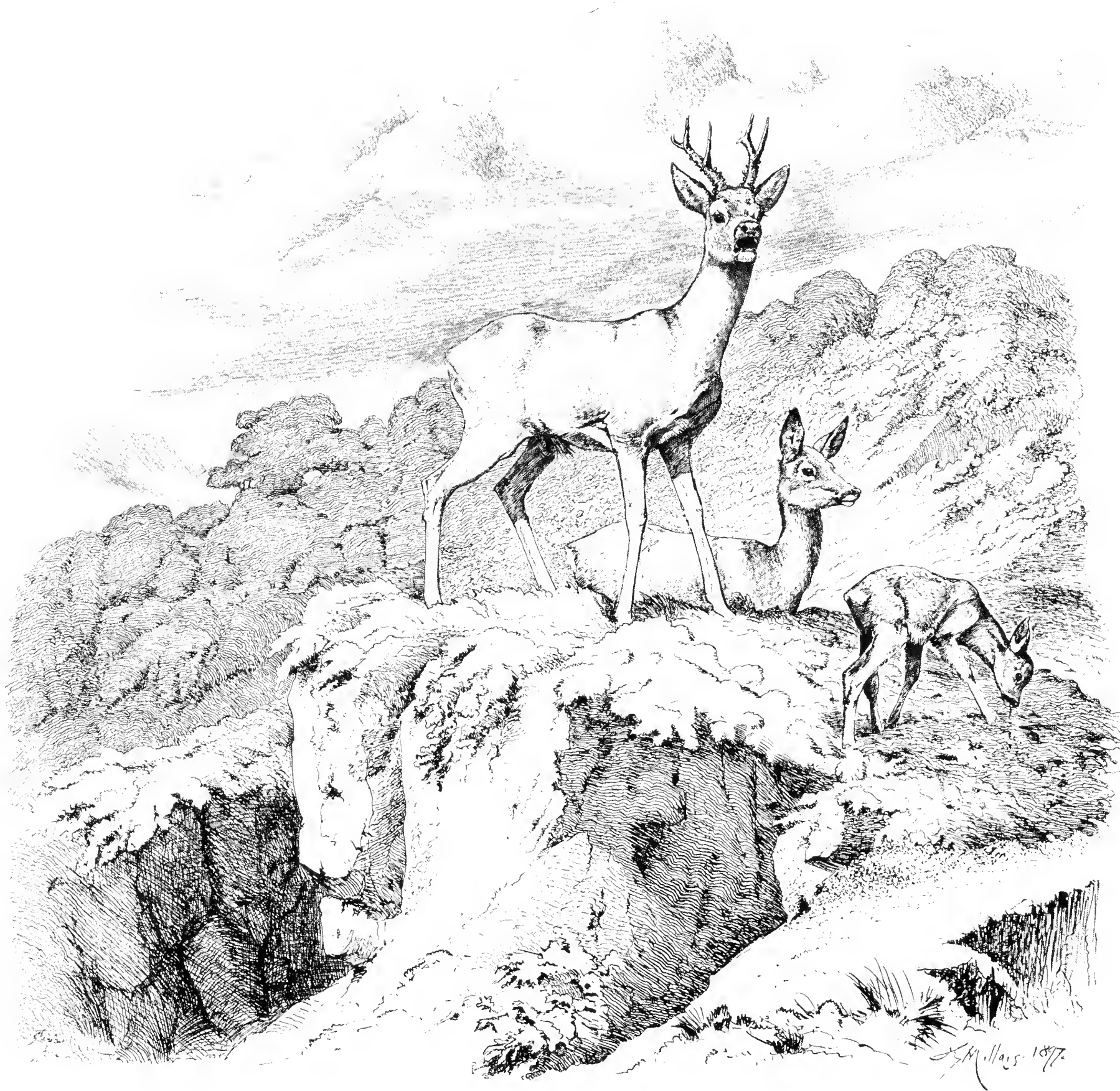


THE LITTLE MISCHIEF-MAKER

with other deer, immediately after, and as a natural consequence of, high condition. Roe are in their very best condition, sometimes even covered with layers of fat, from Christmas till the end of February, yet, oddly enough, March is not the rutting season. Towards the middle of June we generally hear the first bark of the love-stricken buck on the hill-side or in the woods. He is on the prowl about this season, and though there is undoubted evidence that he frequently returns to the same mate if she is not killed or frightened away from her usual range, they are seldom seen together as having actually mated till the middle of July. Many keen observers believe that the roe actually ruts in July, but after giving the subject the very closest investigation I am quite satisfied that this is not the case. The buck stays about with her, or in her vicinity, and even joins her in the early morning or late evening, when he frequently chases her in circles, but I am convinced that *no actual rut* takes place till the end of the first or beginning of the second week in August, more often the latter. The love

chase frequently goes on for eight or ten minutes, the buck chasing the doe in a small circle, but she will not receive his addresses till the date I have mentioned. A stalker, on whom I can rely, has told me that he has seen a buck chase a doe in this manner for half an hour, at the end of which time neither could run another step, and I have myself seen them chase each other for a long time.

The bark of the buck is loud, sharp, and deep in tone, not unlike what a single call



A ROEBUCK BARKING

might be from an old collie. At this season, too, the female gives an amorous call when she wishes the male to come to her. If he is within hearing, he puts his neck out straight and comes full speed to her. In Germany many roebucks are shot by alluring them in this manner, and calls exactly imitating her voice are made for sportsmen's use. One who has shot roe in this manner tells me it is most exciting sport, for the buck comes straight for the sound at full speed, and will only stop, startled, for a second, when he discovers the fraud, and as often as not he passes right on without giving a chance.

By the end of August in the high grounds of Scotland, where the roe have the chance

of wandering, the buck, frequently accompanied by the doe, will go miles up into the deer forest, where they frequent hill-sides or bare tops, often much to the annoyance of deer-stalkers. *Apropos* of the contempt with which stalkers look upon a roe, Mr. Fred. Godman tells me the following amusing conversation between his stalker on Ben Arne and a gillie. They were all three sliding along the hill-side towards a stag in a somewhat difficult position, when a roebuck was spied, of course up wind, right in the way. Donald knew perfectly well that if they got round the roe and gave him the wind the little deer would make off down wind for a wood behind them, and that the stag would not see the move.

"Tuncan," whispered Donald over his shoulder in contemptuous tones, "d'ye ken onything about the ways o' yon beast" (referring to the roebuck). "Wull she rin up wund like a stag, d'ye think?" Tuncan, of course, professed complete ignorance of the habits of so low a creature, but it was noticed by my friend that Donald moved the roe into that wood with consummate skill all the same, and then took a pinch of snuff.

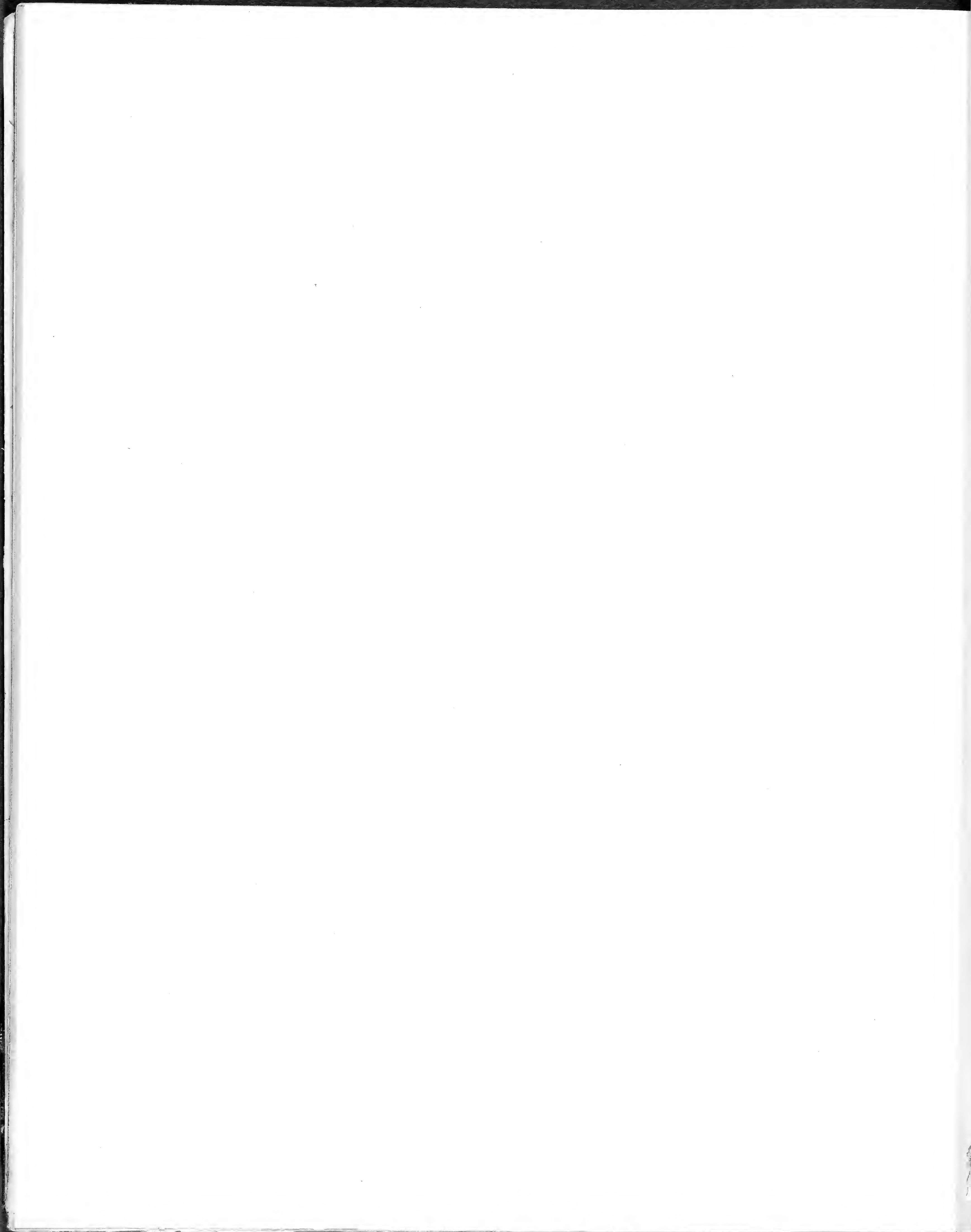
At this season roe are very much bothered by the flies and midges, and one is often able to spot them on the hill-side by their so constantly shaking their heads and ears. All through September the bucks move about much by themselves, whether in woodlands or high ground, and travel for long distances, but the middle of October sees them back again in their favourite woods, where they in most cases rejoin their own family parties on the same beats.

A few keepers who are observant have told me that there is a second rut in October, and I know of two men who both declare that they have seen the rut actually take place at this season. Their evidence was doubtless given in the best of faith. Still, if any attempt to mate again ever takes place, I am sure that it is, as with the October passion of the black-cock, pseudo-erotic. There is not the least doubt that roe, even the bucks too, chase each other frequently at this season as if in play. In fact, I have seen roe acting like this and chasing each other in almost every month of the year.

Certainly among the most interesting things in natural history that I have ever seen are the "roe rings" in the big wood near Cawdor Castle. There is no doubt that these regular playing grounds have been in use for centuries, and the roe have been running in these same identical circles probably since the last glacial period. There were about six good rings when I visited the ground in 1892 and made sketches; three of these had been simply beaten into a track by the thousands of little feet that had used them. One perfect circle under some beech trees about half a mile from the castle had a diameter of about 20 feet. Another was situated outside the wood in the corner of a grass park, and close to a stone wall; whilst the third might be described as a double ring, for it took the form of the figure 8, there being a fir and an ash tree growing in each loop. The roe galloped in and out along the lines of the figure. These curious circles are most used in early summer at day-break, and Sutherland, the head keeper, tells me that hardly a morning passes without there being one or two roe playing in the rings, and sometimes there is quite a party of them. I saw several standing in one of the rings one morning, and from the indentations in the much-worn track, they had just been playing, but they unfortunately saw us and made off at once. Earl Cawdor takes a great interest in these rings and keeps a splendid stock of deer in his wood. It is to his kindness I am indebted for many happy days, when I was quartered for two years and a half at Fort-George, close by.



THE FAIRIES' RING, CAWDOR



In several other woods I have seen what one might call incipient rings made by roe,



THE FIGURE 8 RING, CAWDOR

for the deer certainly resort to fixed spots to indulge in their play ; but I am not aware of any other place in Great Britain where these animals may be said to have established a really



PIED VARIETY, FOYERS, INVERNESS, N.B. (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)

regular playing-ground, as at Cawdor, and doubtless even this unique spot might have

vanished had not the generations of owners taken every care to preserve the numbers of the deer and their favourite resort.

The sight of roe is very keen, and where they are accustomed to be alarmed they will detect danger quicker than a stag, especially if there is the smallest movement on the part of the enemy ; but their hearing is probably about the same as a stag's. After a roe has been once alarmed he is not nearly of such a suspicious character as a red deer, who will often not settle down all day after being disturbed, whereas a roe will get over his fears in a short time, and perhaps may even be seen feeding on the same spot again in an hour or less. They are also full of inquisitiveness, and will try from every point of view the spot where you lie concealed, and where they imagine they have seen something, till a puff of wind from your direction verifies their suspicions.

Does and young bucks are seldom endowed with much cunning, but an old fellow



USUAL ATTITUDE TO ESCAPE BY HIDING

whose life has been frequently sought knows all the tricks of the trade and several more. If you want to shoot a good buck in a wood that you know he frequents, you will have a much better chance if you go with the beaters and keep along the side of the bushes where he generally lies up and breaks back. So well known is this habit of theirs of breaking back, that in one of the beats at Cawdor the guns are placed and the beaters work straight away from them. There was one particular buck at Murthly that escaped us for three years in the big wood. I found he always made for some thick whins in the middle of the beat, so there I placed myself one day by way of experiment, intending to join the line as it came on. The beaters were close to me, when out of the corner of my eye I saw the buck's back as he came up to my ambush and lay down within ten yards of me. Knowing he could scarcely escape, I watched with interest the way he kept moving his head from side to side and working his ears, as if calculating from which side of the bushes the beaters were coming. But fearing he would rush into the line of one of them when they came close, I was obliged to assassinate him on the spot.

When they are wounded too, they will creep into a hole or drain or double on their tracks as well as any fallow buck. One day in November I went out to a wood near the bog at Murthly to beat for blackcock, and was standing forward on an old timber road which led to Strathord. In this part of the ground I knew there were five does only, for the buck belonging to them had been killed in September. Whilst standing at my post I saw the roe coming forward, and took only a casual interest in them as they filed across the road within thirty yards of me. All five passed over, when suddenly a fine buck with a good head sprang into the middle of the road and stood looking at me. He was a stranger, and of course had "got no friends," so I at once let him have both shots, which I felt sure were all right. Anticipating no trouble as he jumped back into the wood, I waited for the keepers to pick him up as they came forward. They, however, had seen nothing, and we worked every bit of ground with three retrievers without any of them showing a sign of interest except to follow on the does, which had gone right ahead. It was most mystifying, as I *knew* the buck must be close by and was hiding somewhere. We had at last to give it up, and had beaten on for a minute or two when I heard a dog barking furiously, but paid no attention to the fact till I suddenly missed my good old dog Jet from my side; then, of course, off I went as hard as I could in the direction of the sounds. I found her standing over the roe, which she had pulled down after a considerable struggle; her mouth was bleeding and there were patches of hair all over the place. What had happened was this:—The buck, on receiving the shots, had sprung from the road straight into the deep ditch running parallel to it; he had then forced his way a few yards through the water and rushes and lain down whilst we were talking and looking back for him. He had then crept along up the ditch for a hundred yards, and finding it turn up into the cover again, had so proceeded "under the wind" till he had passed the dangerous ground and the keepers, who must repeatedly have walked along close to his hiding-place. Jet, however, had stayed behind to potter about, and accidentally striking the trail, had followed it up.

It is well for young sportsmen, anxious to shoot a roebuck and posted forward, to remember that, as with other deer, the best one generally comes last, and so often saves his skin. Many a man has blamed himself for firing at that big doe in front, when by watching out of the corner of his eye he might have seen what was coming and had a nice head to put up in the smoking-room instead.

Although roe are very cow-hocked behind, there is a great deal of grace and elegance about all their attitudes. As they feed along, each leg is most delicately lifted and placed on the ground again, while in danger their movements are quick and deliberate. Roe very rarely trot, their common pace being a bounding canter for a short distance, which soon settles into a rolling gallop, as with so many other species. When they are really frightened, as when beaten out of bushes, they plunge with lowered head at a great pace through the undergrowth, often making beautiful leaps in the air, though not till several yards away. They are good jumpers too, and when put to it, will take a five-barred gate as well as any thoroughbred. One of the prettiest things is to see a troop of roe go through a wire fence; they go at it at such a pace, if frightened, that you imagine they will break their necks for certain. The animals seem to make a hardly perceptible turn on their sides, there is a "ping" of the wires, and on they dash with hardly a check.

The principal food of roe is, of course, grass ; they will eat heather-tops, grain, turnips,



GOING THROUGH A WIRE FENCE

and many roots and plants. They are also particularly fond of rowan berries, and fill their stomachs entirely with them, standing up on their hind legs to reach the fruit. When the

corn is ripe too, they like spending the night in the fields, and make many beds there, for they will lie all day in fields close to a wood, if the farmers give them the chance. They are also very fond of certain species of fungi, which they dig out of the ground with their fore-feet. I have seen large spaces all worked up where they had been in search of these delicacies. A roebuck that I once kept was a good Scotchman, though he had a beastly temper, for he liked nothing so much as oatmeal porridge.

One never sees anything about the weights of roe in books. In Scotland roe are put



ROEBUCKS, MURTHLY, PERTHSHIRE

From a photograph by Geoffrey Millais, 26th October 1889.

on the scales whole, and some years ago when I had the opportunity of handling a good many I used occasionally to weigh them. The average buck weighs about 40 lbs. in October, though, of course, many exceed this, whilst does range from 30 to even 40 lbs. The largest buck I have seen was one I killed at Murthly on 26th October 1889. I had been after him for a long time, when one day, out for a beat by myself with the three keepers, I had the good luck to kill him and two others at the same stand, and from the same troop. All the roe in that part of the ground seemed to have got together in one small wood near the Arch, and as they came by in a string I had just time to get in my three shots. It was such a piece of luck as only happens once in a lifetime. I weighed the

big buck the same night and he turned the scale at 63 lbs., which I fancy must be a very unusual weight. I have not since seen any roe to approach this one in size; he was a little giant amongst his species. Next day when I was out shooting, my brother Geoff took an excellent photo of the three roe. The reader will doubtless criticise the gun, but that was a little joke of G.'s aimed at the special pride and conceit I took in my new ejectors, which were then innovations. I can get no particulars from the Forres districts, where roe are exceptionally fine, and I do not know what is the maximum weight the best bucks ever attain there.¹ Fat is rarely found on roe except at Christmas, and then generally only on yeld does.

Roe swim very deep in the water, in fact, deeper than any other British quadruped, yet the head is held clear and high, and the animal gives one the impression of being quite at home in the water. The roe, however, most probably owing to his long, spindly legs, is not nearly so strong or so fast a swimmer as the stag, and he moves but slowly.

I had a splendid opportunity one day at Murthly of judging the respective powers of a dog and a roe in the water. We were beating the Biars Wood, which flanks the river on the west bank, in which there was a good roebuck. I presently saw him going for the pass under the river-bank, close to where my brother-in-law was standing. The latter did not see the animal until it was close to him, and then fired two shots in a great hurry. The buck thereupon sprang straight into the Tay, which was in heavy spate, and the shooter, thinking that it was badly wounded, shouted to me to bring my dog, which I did at once. Jet needed no encouragement, for she saw the buck in the river as soon as I did, and put on all steam to catch her quarry before he reached the farther shore. But the stream was very heavy, and both animals, trying to quarter it, were carried down several hundred yards. It was one of the most exciting chases I have ever seen, for the gallant dog caught the buck by the ear just as he was feeling his feet in the shallows on the other side. A tremendous struggle now ensued, the roe fighting to maintain a hold on the stones, and Jet pulling and wrestling to keep him in the water. One or the other, however, had to pause for breath sooner or later, and it was the roe that gave in first. Quick as thought, the gallant dog shifted her grip from the ear to the throat, and the battle was hers. She never let go after this, and the buck was dead from suffocation when I met her again a quarter of a mile down on our side of the river. We had great fun with poor Willie James about this roe, for when I came to skin it there was not a single pellet to be found, and the head now adorns my walls labelled "Jet's roe."

A roe doe makes a charming pet, but the buck, if kept in confinement and allowed to become very tame, which he soon does, is never to be trusted. Once having reached maturity he exhibits a savage disregard for every one, especially women, and will on a sudden attack with the greatest fury. I have known a roebuck make an onslaught on a man armed with a good stick, and the biped was glad to escape with nothing injured but his breeches and his *amour propre*. A boy twelve years of age was killed by a tame roebuck a few seasons ago at Brighton. I have kept two roebucks, and both became "impossible" creatures after the third year. One that one of the Murthly keepers kept

¹ Just as this work goes to press, Mr. Sidney Steel, who is staying at Burgie, tells me he shot a buck there this month (January 1897) that weighed 52 lbs.



ROE SWIMMING

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for me was a most curious little beast. He evinced no animosity for the children, but could not stand the keeper's wife at any price, always attacking her if she turned her back on him. Things at last reached a climax one day, and though the scene was a comic one, the lady was very much hurt, and particularly her—ahem—feelings. She was stooping down washing clothes in the burn, when the buck caught her fairly in her ample seat and sent her flying head over heels into the stream. Little things like this made him unpopular, but I was loth to kill him, as he had such a keen sense of the ridiculous, so had him driven into the woods, where he was, I believe, slain at one of the annual shoots. With the exception of the Japanese deer, the roebuck, when tamed, is about as unsafe as any deer, for you never know when he will turn on you, and for an animal of his size his strength is remarkable, and should not be underrated. I became convinced of this one day at Rohallion when, posted forward, I had knocked over a two-year-old buck. He was only stunned, so I put down my gun and got out my knife to stick him. At that moment he commenced to struggle violently, and, knocking the knife out of my hand, we rolled several yards down the hill together. I still kept hold of a hind and a fore leg, not meaning to let him go, and there we had to wrestle for about two minutes till the beaters came up and relieved me, much to their amusement. I could not have held on a moment longer, but the roe was as lively as ever. His long and strong hind legs give a roe considerable pushing power, and he endeavours to pin you down with his head and then pummel you.

Roe are subject to epidemics, but more rarely than other species. About ten years ago a murrain of some description made its appearance at Beaufort, and John Ross, in that one season, picked up the dead bodies of over seventy. Diseases of all sorts are, however, decidedly rare amongst them, and they stand a severe winter better than stags do, eating bark and shoots freely, like rabbits.

It is curious that they will not always thrive when introduced into parks to all appearance suitable for them. At Leonardslee, about the driest and most protected spot in England where wild animals are kept, and where antelopes even thrive exceedingly, roe are not a success, and Mr. G. Assheton-Smith considers them very delicate. Two which got out of his park at Vaynol were chased only a few hundred yards by a dog and then jumped back into the park. Both were found dead next morning. I cannot understand this, and think that most probably the animals were in poor condition, as they had recently been turned down, particularly so because roe are regularly hunted with hounds down in the Blackmoor Vale country in Dorsetshire.

In March 1896 I went down to Dorsetshire, at the kind invitation of the Earl of Ilchester, on purpose to see this form of hunting and the way in which roe behave before hounds. My host was most kind and got out his special hounds, but luck was against us, and we did not find until it was almost pitch dark, so that I saw nothing, and have not even the cheek to give a picture by "our special artist" on the spot. The ground that the roe live in here consists of a series of coombes, covered with thick undergrowth and low-growing bushes, situated for the most part on the sides of the high downs, so a good view can be obtained all round when the game breaks and gallops for another cover, sometimes a mile or two away. Lord Ilchester, who is very fond of this sport, says the roe go at a

rattling pace before the hounds, though seldom giving a very long run. When the deer is bayed he is not killed, and the hounds are whipped off.

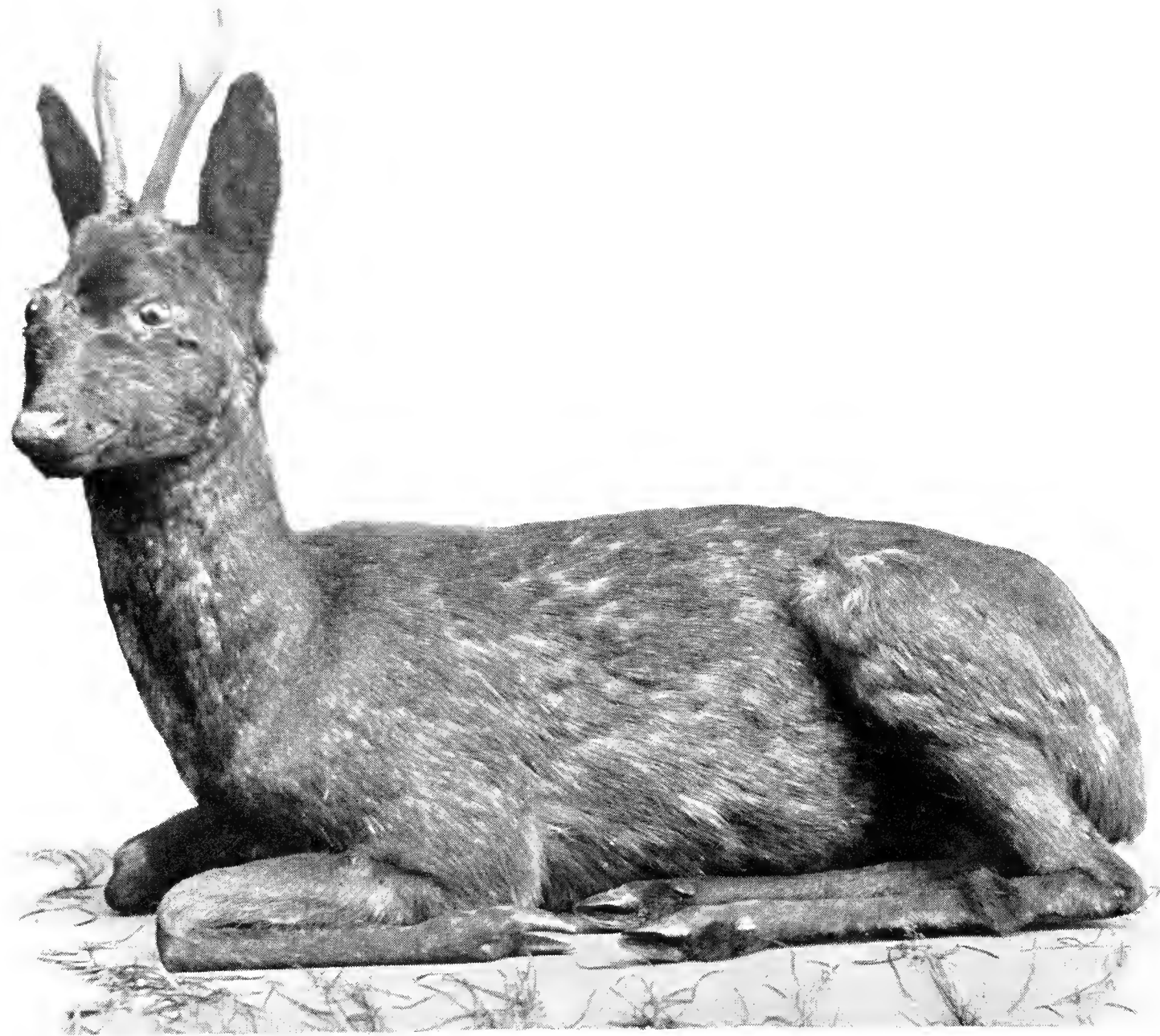
Roe are poached a good deal in Scotland, and there are two districts in the North where never a good animal is killed by the tenants. A good head is marked by the poachers in June and July, and seldom gets a chance of living till the arrival of the shooting tenant. They are generally shot with a rifle at daybreak, and in two towns in the North there are three men I know of who do nothing else during these months. One of these, who, of course, lives in Inverness, was returning with a companion early one morning from



A POACHER'S TRICK FOR CAPTURING ROE BY MEANS OF SET HOOKS

Dochfour when the latter, who had a roe on his back, and his loaded gun, in two pieces, inside his long coat, stumbled in crossing a brook. The gun went off and shot the unfortunate man dead on the spot. The other poacher was at once apprehended and, having to give evidence in the case, proved satisfactorily that he was not in any way responsible for his companion's death. This same man had marked a buck with an exceptional head out Moy way ; he killed it at daybreak, threw it over a wall into the road, and was preparing to follow, when who should come driving along in his dog-cart but the laird himself. There was nothing for it but to hide behind the wall. Now the laird too had had his eye on that buck for some time, but had hardly expected to get it so easily. However, he said nothing, merely threw the roe into his trap, and proceeded on his way.

About the most ingenious poaching trick for catching these animals, of which Mr. Steel, who knows all the poacher's dodges, furnishes the illustration, is, when food is scarce, to attach turnips or other food to a tree in some well-frequented spot. These are placed only just within reach of a roe standing on his hind legs, and immediately underneath the food are fixed several large cod hooks, points upwards. In this barbarous mode of capture one turnip is generally placed below the hooks to whet the appetites of the hungry animals. On straining to reach the food above, they get caught in the throat or under the jaw. This is something similar to the method the poachers used to adopt in the old days in Devon and



MELANIC VARIETY (GERMAN)

Now in the collection of the Hon. Walter Rothschild.

Somersetshire, where deer get into the orchards and reach up for the apples. A tempting apple was suspended by a chain from a strong pliant bough, and the deer, swallowing the fruit, which of course contained large hooks, was thus caught, and played himself to death like a salmon.

Roe are also caught by strong wire snares in the passes, and a clever poacher who adopts the shot-gun is generally accompanied by a small yapping terrier taught to take the game in a circle and bring it back to his master, who lies, like Alphonse, "dans un position favorable." Roe are but little frightened by a terrier, and will keep pottering along immediately in front for great distances without leaving their regular beats and passes.

Eagles frequently attack roe, and the following description by Donald MacIntyre, the head stalker of Black Mount, is interesting, as it shows what a roebuck will do to save his

skin. He says: "I was going round my beat (at that time above Loch Etive, Argyle) one afternoon in summer and saw a roebuck feeding on the hill-side several hundred yards from a wood. All of a sudden he dropped in his tracks as if shot, and the next moment a golden eagle just missed the place where the buck had been standing, and swung up into the air again. The buck, however, did not stay where he was, but dashed off roaring with all his might in abject fear. The eagle immediately got up steam and was after him; the quarry again dropped to the ground just as the eagle was about to seize him by the head. These manœuvres were repeated again and again, and the roe kept roaring with fear all the time he was running until he fairly baffled the clumsy eagle and found sanctuary in the cover."

The venison of roe is not much esteemed in this country, though in Germany it is thought very highly of. It, however, makes excellent soup; but perhaps it is better as "a graun' baste to send to your friends."

Varieties are very rare in this species, and from my notes I give the following instances of whole or partial albinos:—A two-year-old buck, which was cream colour, was killed at Cawdor about the year 1880, and another was also shot about the same time at Brodie; whilst a pied doe, of which I give an illustration, was killed at Foyers, Inverness-shire, a few years ago, and is now in my collection. An adult buck which was said to be pure white was well known in the woods by Kinross in 1894, and a friend who hunts with the Fifeshire hounds told me that the pack got on to this buck one day and ran him to Ladybank, where he was left and the hounds whipped off. I do not think he has been killed, or I fancy I should have heard of it.

For some time the Hon. Walter Rothschild deposited a handsome white variety of this species in the Zoological Gardens, and a curious fact about this animal was that one winter he was white, and the following summer was the natural red, reverting again to white next winter, and back to half-white and half-red in the following summer, when he was killed. A year or two ago a white roebuck appeared at Dalness, causing some alarm in the district, as there is an old Highland superstition that ill luck will befall the owner of the estate should such a thing occur.

Melanic varieties of any birds or animals are very rare, but it is interesting to know that at Steinhuder Meer, in the north of Hanover, a country of moor and peat, all the roes are blackish brown, which even the "tourist" recognises at a glance. There is a black variety of the roe in the British Museum from Westphalia, and the one in the possession of Mr. Walter Rothschild, a photograph of which he kindly sends me, is from Germany, though no locality is given.

The reader may perhaps find fault with me for giving pictures of this variety and one or two German roe heads, on the ground of their not being British; but though such abnormalities have not, so far as I am aware, occurred in this country, they might do so any day, and therefore could be easily recognised in this work.



A WONDERFUL GERMAN ROE HEAD

Shot 12th January 1588, near Marburg in Hessen, by Landgraf Ludwig of Oberhessen. The original head is now in the Museum at Cassel, and it is considered by many to be the finest example in German collections. As the roebucks in Hessen cast their horns at the end of October or in November, it may be supposed that this buck, as sometimes happens, did not throw off at all that year. This irregularity, probably the effect of some disease or fault in the sexual organs, may account for the extraordinary size of the horns. The right horn, in a straight line, is 12 inches, the left 13; number of points, 16. Line A is 3 inches long, whilst the same line in a Scotch roe is $2\frac{3}{4}$, so we see that the actual skull of this extraordinary head is but little larger than one of our own deer.

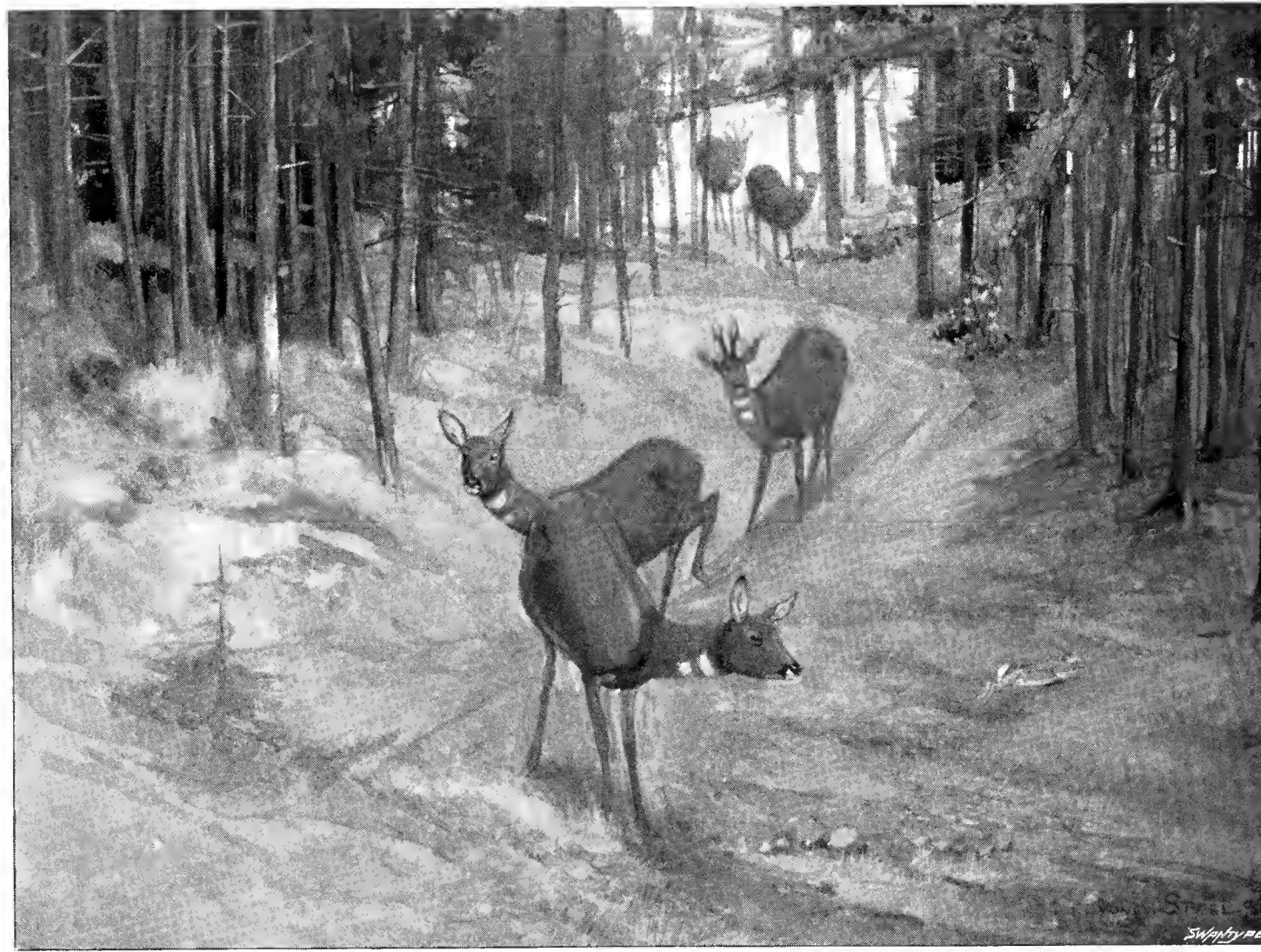
CHAPTER X

ROE-STALKING AND ROE HEADS

FROM the sportsman's point of view our little friend the roe hardly ever receives fair treatment or the consideration that he justly deserves; for that reason I wish to put in a plea on his behalf. The rifle is the proper weapon with which to kill him where it is possible to do so, and there are plenty of estates in the North where, instead of the annual butchery of does and calves, really capital sport could be obtained with a little trouble. Even what is called a roe-hunt would have its justification were all those who take part in it good shots and properly armed; but the average man is not a good shot; and, added to the fact that

many will not even take the trouble to use the larger sizes of shot, the result is that more beasts are wounded than killed. Now this is manifestly unfair, and fairness in sport being a quality we especially pride ourselves upon, it is enough to make any right-thinking sportsman blush to know that such things go on year after year, and that another nation (the Germans) set us an example we might follow to advantage. They stalk him wherever possible, and in that country, where roe-hunting is largely practised, any member of a party who used small shot would scarcely be regarded with favour.

A roe-hunt as it is now carried out is often about as unsportsmanlike a series of blunders as could well be imagined, and one of its chief faults is the fact that that individual exercise of woodcraft, which is the chief glory of all forms of hunting, is entirely done away with.



COMING DOWN THE PASS

Some of the happiest days of my life have been spent pottering about in our Northern woods, with only the companionship of the keepers and a brace of good dogs, and picking up an occasional roebuck, whose passes and modes of life I have made it my business to study. On the other hand, what a lot of roe-hunts I have seen where the little deer were driven by a whole crowd of shouting beaters, whose only object—generally unsuccessful—was to force them to the guns, who were simply stationed and took as much care to conceal themselves as if they were shooting rabbits. Though all the deer in the various beats may be seen, one half will break back, whilst most of the others will have slipped away at odd corners, and the result of the whole day would be one or two does and several half-grown calves.

The best time to hunt roe with the shot-gun is from the beginning of October till the 10th of November, that is to say if heads are desired; but the animals themselves are in the best condition from Christmas till the end of February. By ascertaining the passes used by the roe, and having the assistance of only three beaters, one, or at most two guns can in October

and November shoot the roebucks that they wish for without disturbing the covers. But this must be done by men who know every bit of the ground. It may be properly termed "roe-moving" and not "roe-driving."

During the thirteen years we were at Murthly, I only remember two old roebucks being killed, at the annual two days' cover shoot about the middle of October, when, by the way, every one expected to shoot them. I therefore had the pleasure of hunting bucks after it was over, and generally managed to get two or three good ones every season. In the last six years of our tenancy we killed no does, unless an occasional visitor wished to shoot one, so the stock increased rapidly and wandering bucks from the hills were induced to stay. These crisp autumn days are delightful in the big fir woods of Perthshire, and there is far more real sport, and consequently real enjoyment, in wandering about, with perhaps one companion, and studying at leisure the ways of the wild creatures and their surroundings, than amid the bustle and management that have to take place at every big cover shoot.

The roe is generally looked upon as a stupid, easy beast to shoot, and so he is—*sometimes*. Still, for all that, I have seen more roe missed than woodcocks, and by good shots too. Their peculiar bounding gait, being so entirely different from anything else in the game list, is apt to be confusing to those who have not shot many. One meets keepers who can shoot rabbits well and are duffers at driven birds, so an old friend of mine, Mr. A, is a very ordinary shot, but rarely misses a roe; he loves roe-hunting in its proper sense, and knows all about the deer and their habits. One day at Dupplin a remark of his to another friend, Mr. B, a capital shot and most anxious to kill a roe, was both characteristic and to the point. There had been two or three drives, and B had been put in the passes where the roe would most likely come, but he showed himself at the critical moments, frightening one lot back, whilst in another drive a good buck had detected him and come to me. Lamenting his ill-luck to A at lunch, the only consolation he received was, "Well, old chap, when I want to shoot a roe I don't light my pipe with a lucifer in the first drive, nor blow my nose with a blankety-blank pocket-handkerchief in the second just as the deer are coming on." He had spotted B committing both these enormities.

This work is of necessity becoming long, as one thing leads to another, but I cannot help telling just one little yarn about roe-shooting that is beautifully illustrative of Scotch caution. Every year at Stobhall, at the end of the season, my father used to give the tenants and little farmers a day through the woods. Some of them could shoot, and others were only dangerous to their friends. One winter the party included the local "wut," Jock M'Donald, who, like the rest, thirsted for the blood of a roe. After lunch (during which several healths had been drunk) Jock was placed at the end of a wood, where, on the approach of the beat, he was seen to fire several shots into one spot. The small boys, who were exceedingly thick on the ground, asked Jock what he had been blazing at, as he appeared to be nervous and excited; but his reply was that it was "naethin'," he was "jist shutin' to while awa' the time."

Two days afterwards Jock appeared, looking crestfallen, at the head keeper's house. There was no fire in his eye, and his cheery impudence had deserted him for once.

"Weel, Jeames, that wus a graun' day's shutin' twa days syne," he suggested.

"Yes, Jock, I'm glad ye enjoyed it," was the reply.

"Did a' the laddies get hame a' richt?"

"Ay."

"Are ye perfectly certain?"

"Surely. Why, what's the matter?"

"Oh, naethin'," with a sigh of infinite relief, "but if ye gang to the corner o' Gellies Wud, ye'll find a roe."

In shooting roe with a shot-gun it is most essential to be perfectly silent in taking one's place, and, when once there, to keep quite out of sight and perfectly still. Clothes in colouring as like the surroundings as possible are a great help; a dark "Lovat" mixture harmonises with anything. No. 1 and buck-shot are the best to use in one's gun, but they should be tried first of all, as very few twelve-bores will shoot buck-shot evenly at 40 yards. I have often found it useful to carry a couple of buck-shot cartridges in an outside coat pocket at big cover shoots, as one *may* have the opportunity of slipping them into the gun if a roe should be seen approaching. If you are walking in line with the beaters, when, by the way, a buck is most often obtained, it is well to remember that roe only make their low headlong rush for some 10 or 15 yards and then leap into the air, and offer the best chance at this distance. When thus breaking back they are not always easy to shoot, and under any circumstances it is snap-shooting; if a buck too has a good head, there is generally a beater in the way.

Roe will often rush so close to a beater that the latter must tumble down to get out of the way. One hot day at Cawdor the Bellman was beating with his coat under his arm when a buck rushed at him. In order to turn the beast he threw the garment at its head. The shot was entirely successful, as, catching on the roe's horns, the coat was borne off in triumph much to the amusement of the spectators. Four days afterwards it was found, some distance off, in another wood.

A few years ago a lamentable accident occurred in the big plantation at Blair-Athole through a roebuck breaking back. The cover is here very dense, and Willie M'Cara, one of the stalkers, was going along a narrow pass when a buck dashed back. Neither could give the road to the other, and the roe, putting his head down, struck the stalker in the groin. Dr. Irvine attended him at once and stated that he had very narrowly escaped with his life. As it was, twelve months elapsed before M'Cara was up and about again.

If one has the time and opportunity, most excellent sport can be had by following the roe with a small dog or slow-going hound. Colquhoun in *The Moor and the Loch* well describes this form of the chase, and suggests that a foxhound is best for this purpose. A roe when he is thus pursued never keeps very far ahead of the hound if unpressed, but will trot along at a short distance in front of his pursuer, making frequent stoppages to see if he is still being followed. He, moreover, will not go off his beat, but will work in a circle and return again and again to the same passes, so that the hunter can, if his knowledge of the ground is complete, take up a good position and shoot the buck. I should have thought myself that a foxhound was too fast, and have seen both a basset and a big Scotch terrier follow close on a roe for half a day. The wonderful nose and dogged perseverance of the basset were well described by old James Keay (the Murthly keeper), to whose care my brother had for the first time confided a hound of this description.



SWED. ENSTEDT PUBLISHED

The Last Drive, Robaklion.



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"Aweel, ye see, sir," he remarked on being questioned as to its behaviour, "he's a verra guid dowg, but he just says 'Wouf! wouf!' and ye dinna see him for twa days."

Spaniels are very useful roe dogs, and in many shootings no other kinds are used, as they are keen, have good noses, and are very plucky. I remember once, at Cambusmore in Sutherland, seeing a spaniel bringing a roe from nearly a mile away straight up to me. I was posted on some rising ground looking over the big wood-swamp which extends for several miles to the south of the Mound. The beaters had gone a long way back and had just commenced when I saw from my post, on one of the regular passes, a little white spaniel chasing something which I at first thought must be a rabbit, but on coming to the open it proved to be a roe. It was interesting to see the movements of the two animals as they approached, for they came forward over the open heather. The little deer would let the dog come up to within about twelve yards, and would then start off at a rapid pace for the next few hundred yards till the pursuer was again close up. As the roe entered a strip of more or less open plantation, where I could still watch her, she adopted a zigzag course by making rushes off the pass to a distance of 50 yards or more to the right or left, apparently trying to throw the dog off the scent, but this was not successful, though she certainly increased the distance between herself and her pursuer.

This swamp by the Mound is a favourite place for roe in the early winter, and during this particular day's shooting Major Laing and I must have seen about thirty altogether, and our day's bag was nine.

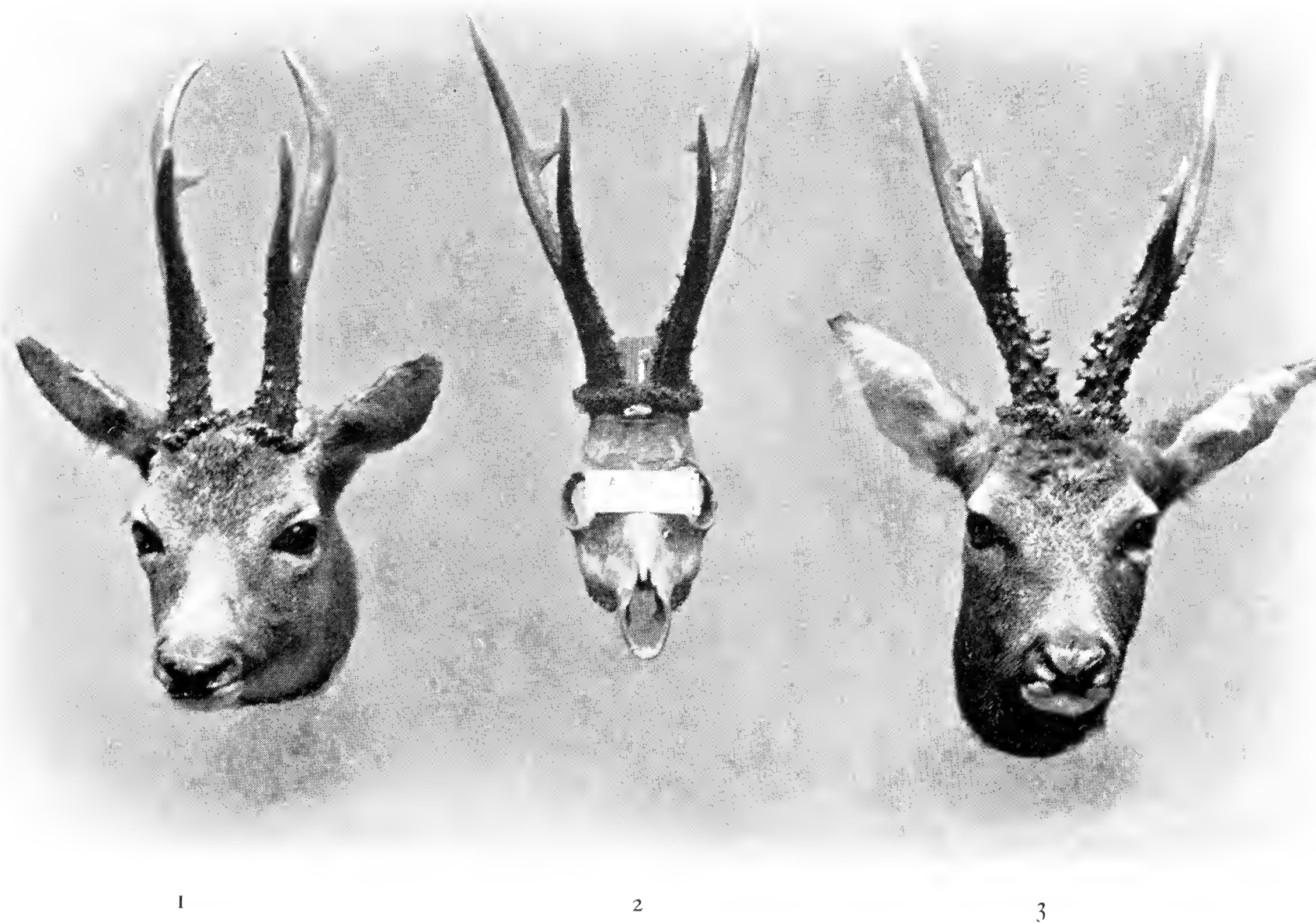
Almost every animal with horns is a good or bad object of the chase as we ourselves make him, for the instincts of self-preservation are principally aroused by constant persecution, and it is generally the case that in proportion as both the approach and the weapons of destruction become more scientific, so do the natural cunning and intelligence of the quarry also advance. Some beasts are not capable of affording the higher forms of venery, but others are, and amongst them is the roe, so where possible let us all give him the fair play meted out to the stag.

The roebuck affords excellent sport with the rifle in certain districts, and where so stalked he becomes vigilant and entirely worthy of our consideration in every way.

Roe-stalking possesses many charms of its own. In the first place, you can enjoy it at a season when there is no other shooting going on; secondly, it takes you out in the early morning when all nature is full of life and beauty, and before the heat of the day commences; and thirdly, where the chase of the animal is as systematically conducted as with red deer, the nature of the sport is everything that can be desired. I would therefore put forward a plea that tenants and owners of part-wood, part-forest lands in Argyle, Inverness, Ross, and Aberdeen, should turn their attention to stalking the roe in preference to killing them during the usual wood shoots. Many owners do so already, whilst others quite neglect the amusement which lies at their doors, and will probably continue to do so because it involves getting up at two o'clock in the morning. There is no pressing the point that the roe is a beast of equal intelligence to the stag, for in nine cases out of ten, if the ground is at all open, he is easily circumvented, and nowadays it is only the *individual* roebucks in certain estates where they are regularly stalked that really call upon one to exercise the woodcraft of the hunter. Such a wily old fellow lived close to Ross's house at Beaufort for several

years previous to 1892, and though roe-stalking was systematically carried out in August by the various tenants and their friends, (so far as I know) nobody ever obtained a shot at him until one day he met his end by a fluke. In both 1890 and 1891 Mr. Van André and Lord Wimbourne had kindly given me a day at Kiltarlity, and I very much wished to shoot this particular roebuck, which was called "Old Queer Head" by Johnny Ross. Each day, both morning and evening, we had seen him, and had made two or three stalks, but every time he vanished in a most mysterious way just as we were expecting to get a shot.

In 1892 I was again with Ross, and my first question was whether Old Queer Head was



SHAPE OF HORN-GROWTH DUE TO ENVIRONMENT

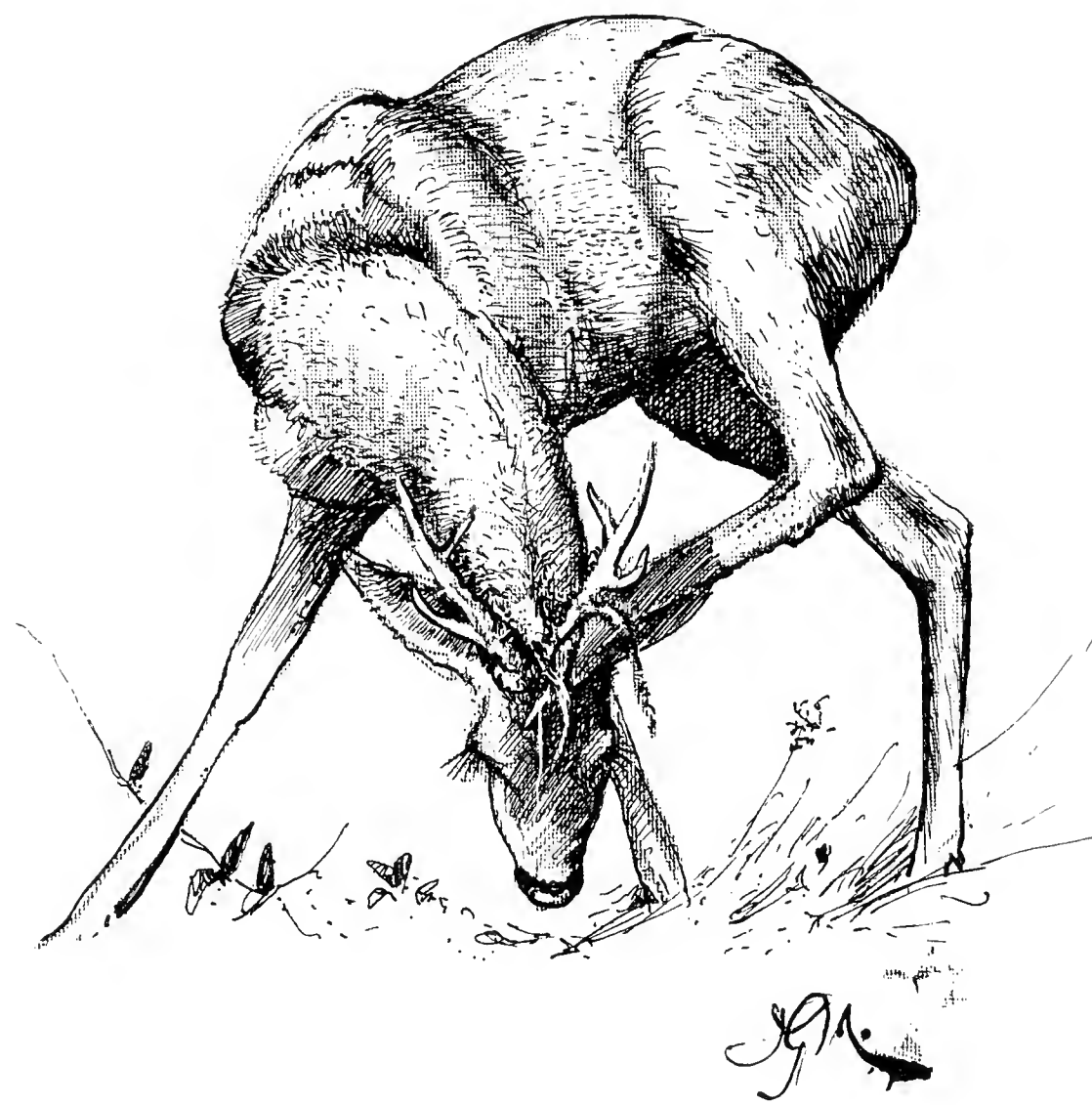
These are three typical heads of roebucks which have lived in—1. A heavily-wooded country with much thick under cover and no open ground (Stobhall, Perthshire). 2. A part forest, part open country (Altyre, Elgin). 3. An open, rugged, and mountainous country, where the woods on the hill-sides are also fairly easy to get through (Beaufort, Ross-shire). The reader will notice the close-set and heavier horns of the more southern roe. The brows in Perthshire specimens are generally finer than those from Ross and Inverness, which are, however, as a rule, rougher and of better shape. The Altyre and Darnaway heads, when good, are perhaps the best of all, as they show an intermediate type which combines the beauties of both of the other two. (Author's collection.)

still to the fore, to which he replied in the affirmative, and that he was then actually in the wood within 200 yards of the house.

It was in the dusk of a July evening, and from the door we saw Old Queer Head's wife come out for her evening feed, and a moment later there was a "ping" in the wire fence, and the buck himself appeared. The rifle was out of its case and put together in a moment, and we crept down to a grassy mound as I congratulated myself on such an easy chance. But the rifle was hardly topping the hillock, and I had just made out his dim outline in the dusk, when there was a loud bark and the old villain was gone like a flash. Early next morning we were out in another direction, towards Auchnacliach, and on the way home I got a buck with a very good head. As the day was cool, we expected to find our old friend out and feeding at about 11 o'clock.

Beaufort is simply ideal ground for roe-stalking, and from a mound close to Ross's house you can spy one great valley which embraces all sorts of broken country, and then, by walking to a mound only a short distance away, another large extent can be run over with the glass.

Nearly everything in this sport consists in patience and sitting still if you have a good vantage ground to look from, for roe, being small, are not easy to pick out amongst trees and bushes, and when they lie down they are still more difficult to see. It was from the first of the two mounds that we expected to spot "Queer Head." We had been looking for him intently most of the morning, when suddenly he walked out of a little copse and disappeared over a rise. The distance was not more than 200 yards, and making sure he had not seen us, we ran down a hollow and looked carefully over a ridge commanding a clear view in every direction, but could see no buck—only his doe, who was quietly feeding



ROEBUCK FINISHING THE FRAYING OF HIS HORNS WITH HIS HIND FOOT

within 50 yards. There we lay more than an hour, thinking that he would show near her, but this he never did. To make a long story short, we saw him twice again in the evening, and were again defeated. However, Ross spotted him for the last time just as the trap came to the door to take me back to Beaulieu. "Queer Head" was feeding on a hill-side covered with small firs and deep heather, and there was no chance of a shot except from below. After we had worked carefully towards the spot where he was last seen, he suddenly sprang up within 50 yards and galloped up the hill as hard as he could tear, and knowing I should probably never have another chance, I took a snap at him just as he entered the bushes. Ross said he was hit, but I thought not, and overruled his wish that we should get the dog and have a look for him. A short time afterwards I received a letter from Ross saying that I was very foolish not to have searched for the buck that morning, as he had just been found

lying within a few yards of the spot where I fired at him. Accompanying the letter were Old Queer Head's skull and horns, which present a curious malformation. One pedicle has been jammed down backwards and inwards, so that the two horns follow one another on the head, like the hands of a vulgar little boy in the act of "cocking a snook." It was entirely emblematic of his career.

This little yarn is intended to show that a roe is not always an easy creature to circumvent even when he does inhabit a limited area; and in the many enjoyable days roe-stalking that have fallen to my lot I can recall plenty of instances when the roe has afforded every bit as good sport as the stag. One day at Eskadale Hugh Ross and I had a somewhat curious experience. We had toiled all day, from daybreak till dusk, and were in the evening about to turn uphill to the cottage, when there, right in the middle of the public highroad, the last place one would of course have expected to see him, stood a buck. Just as I fired he moved, and the bullet merely cut the skin under the brisket. It gave him such a fright, however, that instead of turning back into the wood, he sprang forward and cleared a high wall which led downhill to open fields skirting the Beaully. After running for some time I expected every second he would stand and offer me another chance; but no, on he ran till he reached the swollen river, into which he plunged without a moment's hesitation. I was not so very far behind, and as he reached the middle of the river, fired at his head—result, a miss just over the top. Then another shot, and the head fell to one side and drifted down the stream. Though our buck was now dead, the fun had only just begun, for not 800 yards below were the rushing rapids, where no one but a fool would go even in the stout coble lying upside down on the shingle close by. Never on this earth was there such a boat to move as that, and we saw the buck come drifting by as Ross and myself toiled and sweated to move the wretched thing from the weeds that had grown around it. At last it was launched and the roe recovered from the river just as we were entering the Ailean Aigas rapids.

ROE HEADS

A good stag's head, even nowadays, is not by any means rare; but a first-class roebuck's head is, and I believe always has been, quite a rarity.

In a season's shooting one sees many fine examples of the former, although they may not always measure well, but it is quite an exceptional year when more than three or four first-class roebucks' heads pass into the hands of the stuffers.

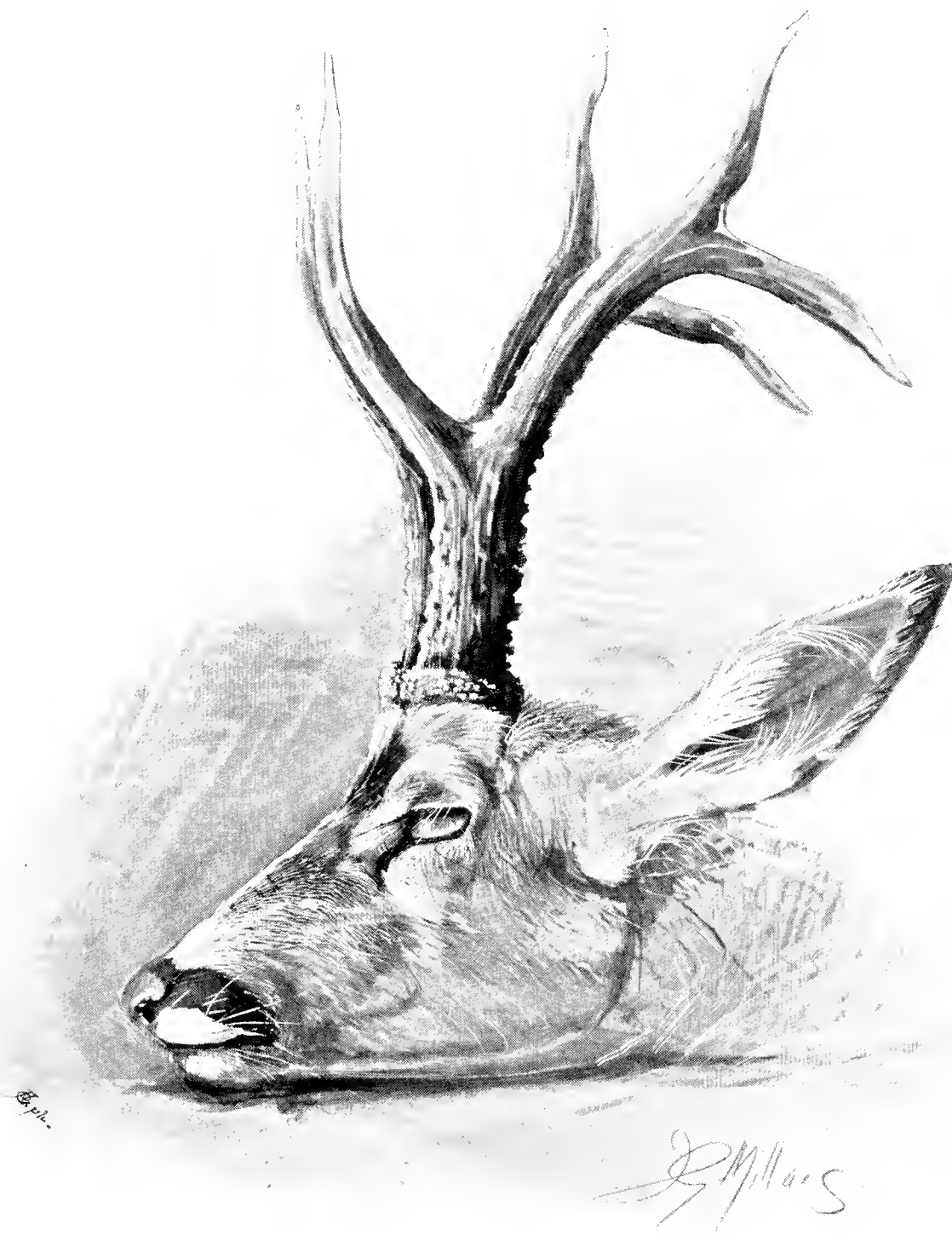
At the beginning of the last chapter I mentioned how very unusual it was to find horns of the roe of Pleistocene times which were in any degree better than those of to-day, and I give a photograph of the only two which have come under my notice. Only since the year 1892 has there been any marked deterioration in the horns of Scottish roe, and this only applies to the greater part of the country north of Inverness, for in other parts there is no perceptible difference.¹ With regard to roe heads the usual talk about deterioration does

¹ In 1895 Mr. Lucas Tooth kindly gave me a day at Beaufort. On the open roe ground of Kiltarlity, working hard all day, from daylight till dark, I only saw two very poor bucks with wretched heads. In 1890 I once saw no less than seven good bucks in an evening on this same ground.

not apply, for in the collections of the late Seaforth and Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming (the great collectors of roe heads in their day) there were no examples better than recently-killed heads now in collections which are here illustrated.

The best roe heads now found are grown by animals inhabiting districts within 15 miles of Perth, Beaulie, and Forres. I give an illustration of three very fine typical heads in my collection from these areas, showing how, even at such short distances apart, the difference of shape and quality is entirely due to environment (p. 206).

Sometimes a good head is obtained in the woods near Stirling, in the south of



A GOOD HEAD, ALTYRE

Argyleshire bordering the Clyde, in the Ayrshire, Forfarshire, and the Dumfriesshire woods, but for one good head from these places there are six obtained in the former localities.

Bell, in his *British Quadrupeds*, seems to have known little about roe, for his notes are mostly from contributed sources, and his woodcut of the annual change of horns, from the second till the sixth year, may be perfectly correct for an individual specimen, though it does not apply to roe generally. In fact, in roe horn-growth there is the paradox that there is nothing regular but irregularity. After passing through the spike stage of the second year, to which a brow is added in the third year, the horns, though *generally* having a good brow and two small top points in the fourth, may after the fourth year take almost any form of bad or good development in the brow point and tops till head-decline sets in.

I cannot state positively the age attained by roe, but think it averages about twelve years, and, judging from bucks in confinement and known bucks in a wild state, head-decline seems to set in earlier than in any other species, though the bodies are in no way affected. Probably the rarity of good roe heads is due to this early head-decline, which takes place generally after the eighth year. Assuming that a roe does not reach full head-maturity till its fifth year, the period of fine horn-growth must therefore be very short.

Here is a good example of horn-degeneration exemplified in the head of a buck which I knew for seven years at Murthly. Living on an outside beat, he was hardly ever molested, and was so cunning as never to endanger his life till the autumn of 1893, when Mr. Athol Macgregor shot him. That gentleman kindly sent me the skull, thinking it was an



HEAD OF A VERY OLD ROEBUCK, THE HORNS HAVING DECLINED

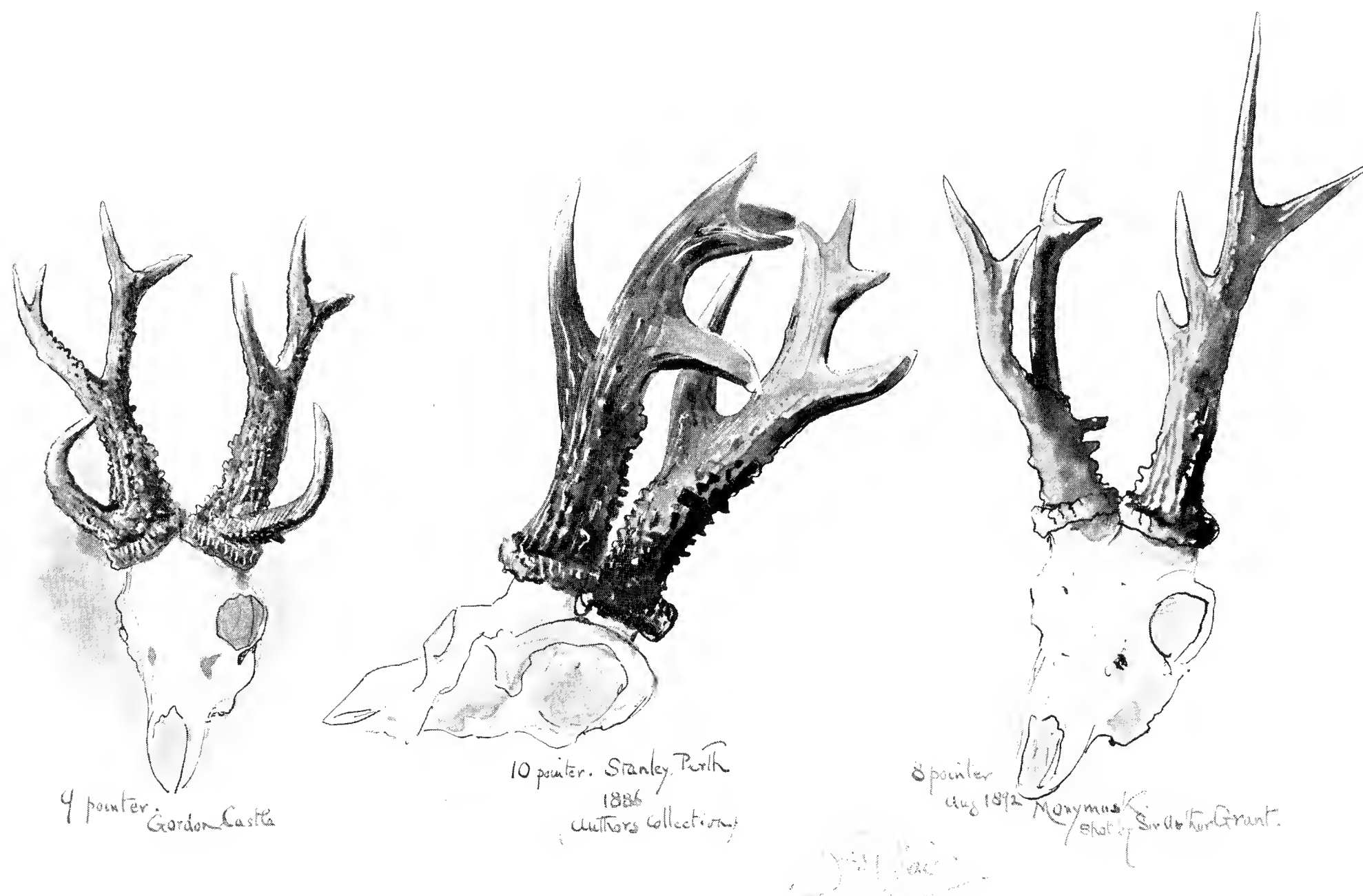
interesting one. This buck was in his prime when he first came to Gellies Wood, and, so far as I recollect, had a good head for three or four years, after which Keay (the keeper) said it declined until it was shot in 1893.

Though not singular in this respect, roe will often grow their very best heads when their bodies are in an emaciated condition. One of the best heads I have shot was that of a buck I killed at Kiltarlity in 1891. On examining the body, which was nothing but skin and bone, I found that a charge of No. 6 shot had simply riddled the poor little beast in the previous autumn, and I doubt very much if it could have lived many weeks longer. The effects of this shock to the system were shown in the tardy completion of the new horns, for, though the month was July, the horns were only just fraying. Curiously enough, the horns themselves were extremely fine. Another buck in the Zoo Gardens, 1894, died of decline, and was in a state of decline during the whole of the last horn-growing period; he threw

out a far finer growth just before death than he had done in the previous years when in first-rate health, the coronets being really fine.

A good roebuck's head is certainly a thing of beauty, and though not large, is well worthy of an honoured place on a sportsman's walls. Perhaps its chief attraction lies in its roughness, so characteristic of the rugged hill-sides and shaggy woods where it loves to dwell.

The horns themselves are more liable to malformation than those of any other deer, for the animals, with their habits of diving headlong through the cover when they are frightened, and moving about at night when their horns are constantly in a soft condition, strike them against obstacles. Wire fences too, when first put up, have much to answer for



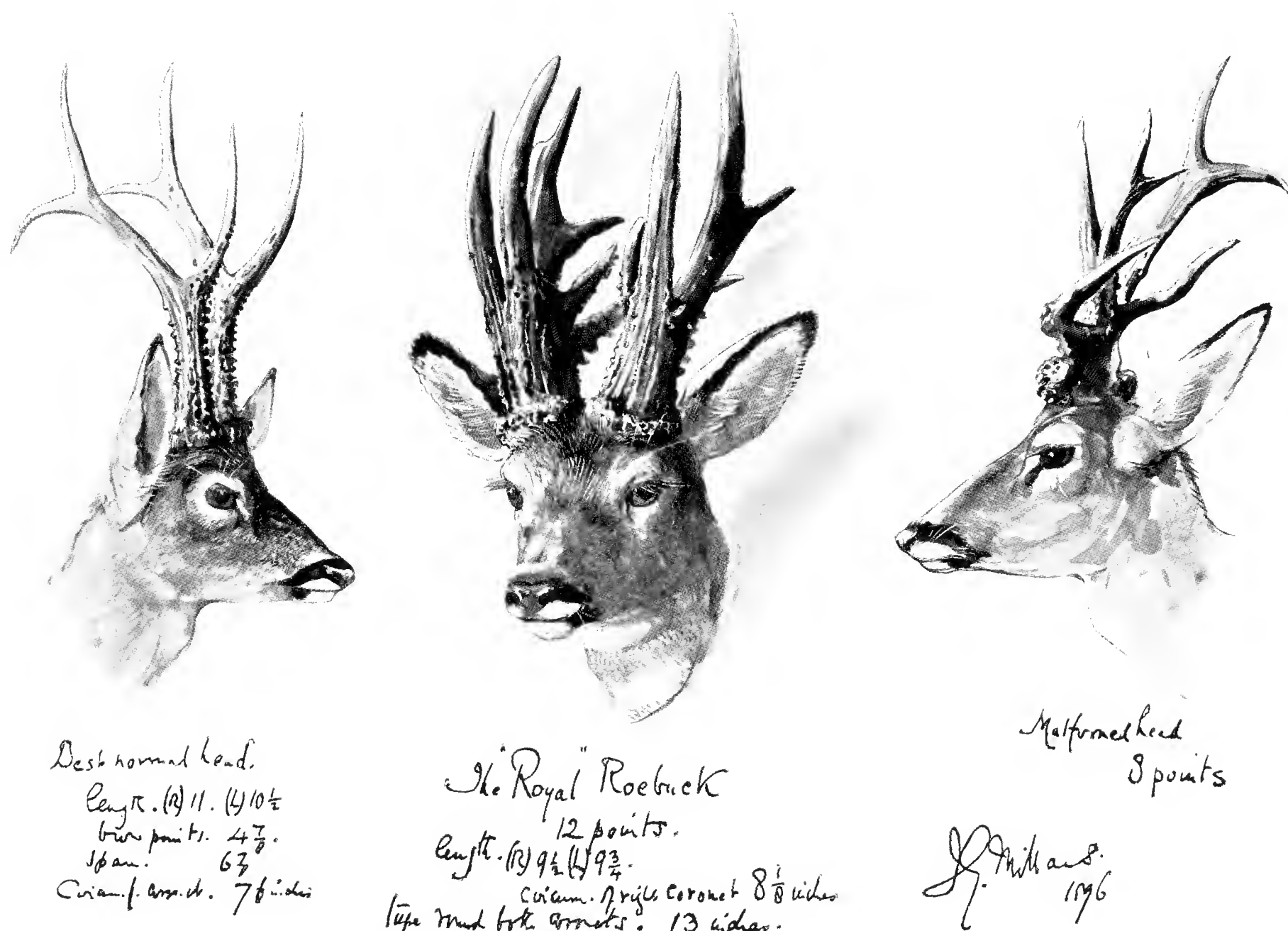
HEADS WITH AN UNUSUAL NUMBER OF POINTS

in this respect. At Monymusk, where Sir Arthur Grant kills about forty in the year, nearly half the heads have some deformity, which he attributes to wire fences. If the reader has ever seen a buck going through (or under) a wire fence when he is frightened, he will then understand how the damage is done. In Germany these "sport" heads are looked upon as great treasures, and large sums are paid for them. The three best I have seen are here figured, two being in the collection of the late C. Macpherson Grant, and now at Drumduan House, Forres,¹ and the third, an Irish one, in the possession of Sir Henry Gore Booth.

An average head measures 8 inches, with a brow point of 2 inches, and a coronet

¹ This fine collection includes many good heads shot and presented to the late C. Macpherson Grant by the late Basil Brooke, a well-known roe-hunter of his day. Now it has passed into the possession of Sir George Macpherson Grant, to whom I am indebted for being allowed to reproduce the best heads.

measurement of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The heads of bucks south of Blair-Athole will be found to be somewhat longer than those of the North country, but they are generally placed closer together, and are not of such good shape. Southern Scotch roe too frequently have horns of unequal size. The very best Scotch heads are generally about $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and it is rare to find one that exceeds this measurement and is of good shape and strong throughout. One would expect to find that the Dorsetshire roe were superior in head to the Scotch ones, but such is not the case; their average is much the same, and I have never seen a first-rate head from there. The best I know of is one in velvet, owned by Mr. J. E.



THREE BEST HEADS

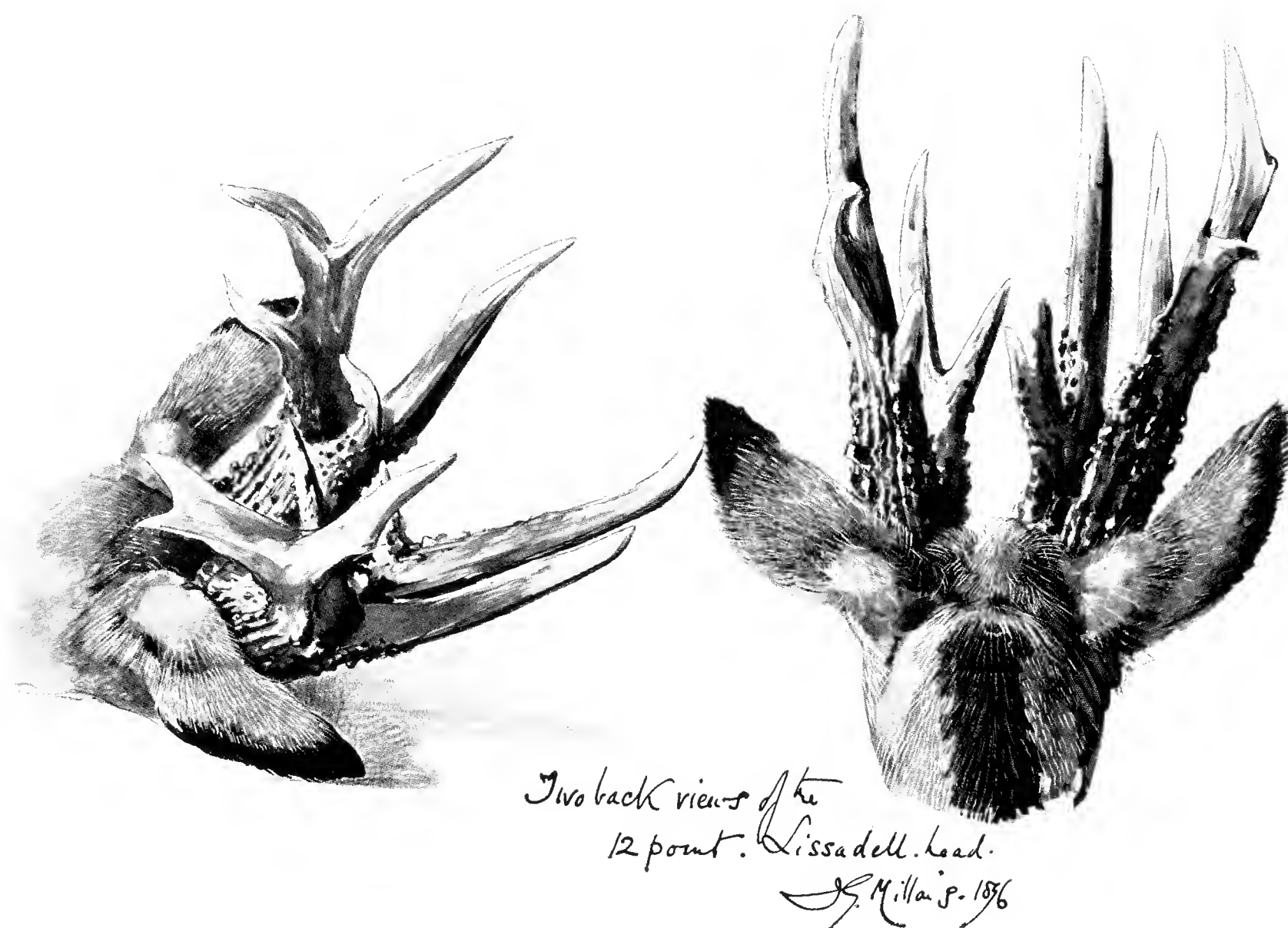
Sir Henry Gore Booth's collection, Lissadell, Sligo, Ireland.

Harting; it was accidentally killed when that gentleman was catching the roe for Epping Forest, length $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and it is what one would call a good head and no more. In Milton Abbey, near Temple Combe, are said to be some good examples. The Hon. Gerald Lascelles kindly sends me the measurements of a really good New Forest roe, which compares well with the best Scotch: length, $9\frac{1}{2}$; extreme width, $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches (this is extraordinary); circumference of beam above burr, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches; length of brow, 3 inches. The soil in the New Forest is poor, but there is good feeding for roe, and immense quantities of holly, on which all deer like to browse in winter.

Without doubt the most remarkable roe heads grown in the British Islands within historic times are those now frequenting the Lissadell woods in the county of Sligo, Ireland. Though only a recent introduction to these parts, the condition of the soil,¹ climate, and

¹ Lissadell is on a limestone formation.

surroundings are so pre-eminently suitable to the little deer that they have attained to a pitch of excellence in a short time that is little short of wonderful. They are not numerous, and Sir Henry Gore Booth, the owner, takes a just pride in his roe and shoots only a few annually. Being prevented by illness from accepting that gentleman's kind invitation to see his ground and the heads in the house, Sir Henry most kindly packed up his best heads and sent them over to me. Sir Henry sends me his three best examples of the various types—the wonderful 12-pointer, the best normal head, and the best malformed head. They are all extraordinary, and it is not too much to say that the Royal roebuck is quite the most wonderful roe's head in Great Britain (until some one shows us a better one). The immense thickness and weight of horn throughout, in addition to the extraordinary number of

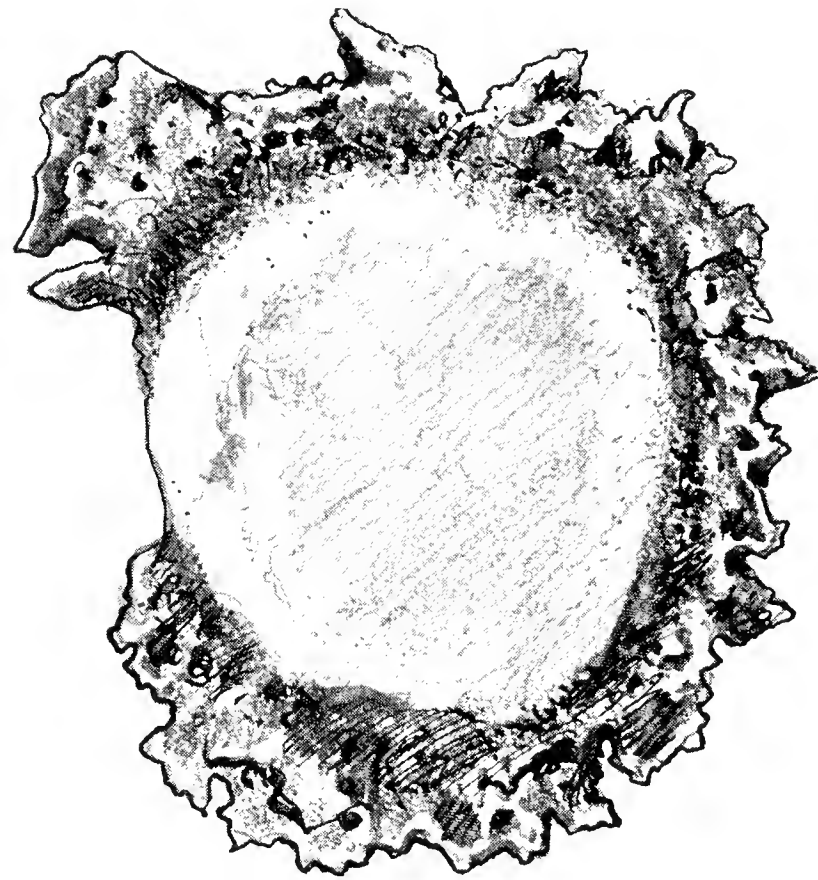


In this manner the great thickness of this remarkable head can be seen and all the points counted.

genuine points, place it in a class by itself, and it is doubtful if any recent German head can show such a remarkable horn-growth. It is just what the Warnham head is amongst park deer. From the front, beyond the great double brow points, its massiveness makes the horns look short, whereas, as a matter of fact, they are well above the average length of a good roe head. It is only by looking down on the head from the top and back that one can appreciate the great size, thickness, and roughness all through. (The best normal head should, I think, take rank with Colonel Gordon-Cumming's and one in my possession. All three heads are quite perfect in every way; all are 11 inches or over, of good shape, excellent roughness, and have long, well-developed brows and tops.) In addition to these three, Sir Henry kindly sent for inspection two dropped horns that had been picked up. They certainly look like the right and left horns of the Royal roebuck in two previous years; but the owner thinks otherwise, and that they belonged to another great buck that is still

alive. These are massive horns with immense coronets, one being 9 inches and the other $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches in circumference. The reader will, if he is a roe-hunter, think perhaps these measurements so extraordinary, that I have taken a tracing on paper of the largest of the two, so that he can see for himself that there is no exaggeration. In one of the rooms at Colebrooke is the collection of roe heads formed by the late Sir Victor Brooke. They are nearly all Scotch, and there is nothing unusual amongst them except the female roe head with rudimentary horns (figured). The heads of roe that were killed at Colebrooke also present no points of interest.

Cast horn.
Roe buck. Lissadell.
Sligo. Ireland.
Circumference of
the coronet $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches
J. Millais.



ACTUAL SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL HORN

SCOTCH ROE HEADS

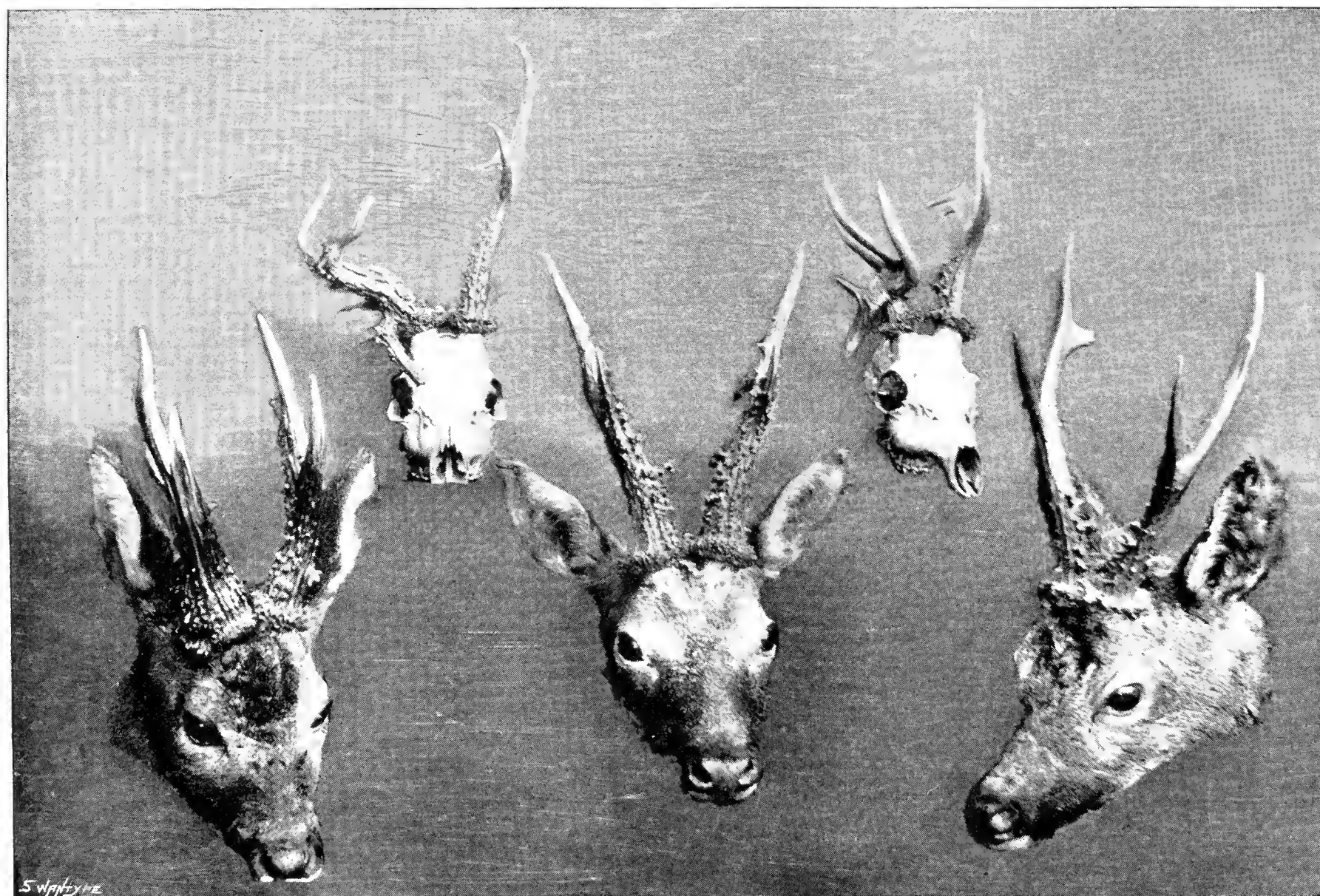
Whilst Continental sportsmen have been collecting trophies of the chase for centuries, no one in this country seems to have thought much of a stag or roe's head until well on in the present century—in fact, the horns of the latter were regarded as of no value in that way, and only of use to the cutler as handles for knives and forks.

It is not surprising, then, that we have no collections of roe heads to compare with that of Count Arco, for instance, who till recently possessed no less than 2300 odd roe heads; whilst rumour has it that the owner admitted spending not less than £60,000 on his collection. Thirty years ago the two first collectors of roe heads in this country may be said to have been the late Mackenzie of Seaforth and Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming. The former's collection is said to be more or less intact, but when I visited it at Brahan Castle in 1890 I was much disappointed. There were only one or two good heads, a nice mossed one, of which a photo is given, and certainly no extraordinary examples such as one would expect to find, considering the advantages the collector enjoyed, and his keenness in following his hobby. I could hear nothing of a horn a foot long, which Snowie says his father had sold to Seaforth many years ago.

Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming's collection, which must have been a really fine one, came,



HEAD OF A ROEBUCK WITH REMARKABLY LONG HORNS
Shot by R. Moncrieff, Esq., at Foulis-Wester, Perthshire; length, $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



THE BEST HEADS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE C. MACPHERSON GRANT, AND NOW AT DRUMDUAN, FORRES

1. Malformed head killed in Darnaway.
2. Shot by the late owner in Brodie Wood, near Forres; 10 points.
3. Old Bar, Forfarshire; right horn of great thickness, 7 inches
2 inches above the coronet, length 9 inches.
4. A perfect head, killed at Mulbouie, Ross-shire; very rough and of
fine shape, length $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
5. Darnaway, Morayshire; length, 10 inches.

alas ! to the hammer some years ago, and most of the specimens were scattered. Sir William Gordon-Cumming, however, obtained the best of them, and they are now in Altyre House, near Forres, where there is a grand collection of heads of all kinds. I visited Altyre twice in 1890, but unfortunately found that German roe heads and Scotch ones had been mixed indiscriminately, and there were no labels to show which were which. To the British collector, therefore, their interest is gone, though there are many grand heads in Altyre which, I feel sure, are genuine Scotch ones. None of the following collections are big, but

they are the best of to-day : Altyre House (Sir William Gordon-Cumming) ; Drumduan Castle, Forres (formed by the late C. Macpherson Grant, and now the property of Sir George Macpherson Grant) ; Ballindalloch Castle (Sir George Macpherson Grant) ; Moniack Castle (J. Cameron, Esq.) ; Forres House (Colonel Gordon-Cumming) ; Dupplin Castle (the Earl of Kinnoull) ; my own collection.

There are also a few good heads in the possession of Earl Cawdor, Cawdor Castle ; Captain Brooke, Fairley, Aberdeen ; Lord Lovat, Beaufort ; Mr. C. M. P. Burn, Pitcroy House, Blacksboat ; the Duke of Athole, Blair-Athole ; the Earl of Mansfield, Scone Palace ; Sir Arthur Grant, Monymusk ; Mr. Sidney Steel, Perth ; whilst Colonel Richardson of Ballathie and Mr. Hume Graham-Stirling of Strowan have each a good head. Mr. H. M. Warrand, too, has two exceptional heads, one of which, a 12-pointer, is referred to later.

A head shot by Mr. Robert Moncrieff of Perth at Foulis-Wester, measuring $12\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length, is the longest Scotch head I have seen, but it is a mediocre example in other respects, and the horns are very close together.

Now to say a few words about the best collections :—

1. *Drumduan House, Forres* (formed by the late C. Macpherson Grant).—The collection is certainly the

largest and most varied I have inspected. It is particularly rich in malformations. The most remarkable of these is a 10-pointer shot by the owner in Brodie Wood. There are also two so-called perruque heads, one an extraordinary one. It was found in Darnaway, and I remember how delighted the owner was the day he got it, as I happened to call on him that day. The other one was found dead at Beaufort, and was originally in my collection, but Macpherson Grant had a particular fancy for these abnormalities, so I gave it to him. The horns are two heavy *solid* masses, very thick, about 8 inches long, and no points. There is also a head from Old Bar in Forfarshire, whose right horn is of extraordinary thickness, being 7 inches in circumference 2 inches above the coronet. This fine collection has, curiously enough, only one really first-class normal head,



KILLED AT ORTON, SPEYSIDE

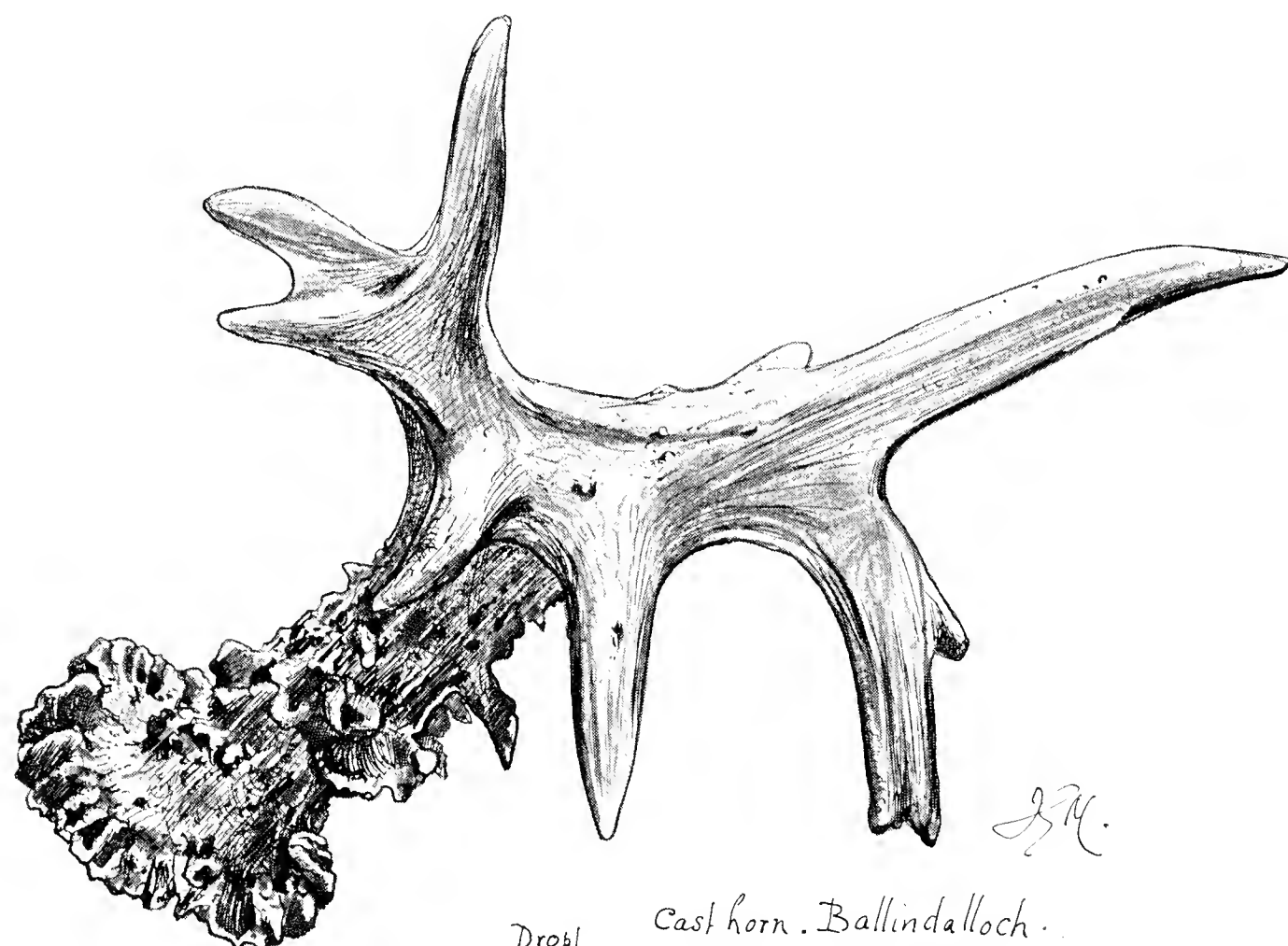
In the possession of Sir G. Macpherson Grant, Bart. ;
length, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches (restored point).

but it is a beauty, very rough, of exceptional shape, beautiful coronets, and length $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and Snowie of Inverness, from whom it was bought, considered it the best head that ever passed through his hands.

2. *Ballindalloch Castle* (Sir George Macpherson Grant).—Sir George has not many heads, but they include three remarkably fine normal ones, whose measurements are respectively—

Length.	Brow Point.	Span.	Circumference of Coronet.	
$11\frac{1}{2}$ ¹	$3\frac{3}{4}$	$7\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{2}$	Bought in Elgin, and shot at Orton, Speyside (figured).
$10\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{3}{4}$	6	$6\frac{1}{2}$	Ballindalloch.
$10\frac{1}{2}$	...	$6\frac{1}{2}$	...	Shot by owner at Ballindalloch.

and a single dropped horn quite unique in its way. I give a careful drawing of this example, which gives the reader a better idea than any verbal explanation. Without doubt, had there



Drop|| Cast horn. Ballindalloch.
8 points. Length $9\frac{1}{2}$ round coronet. $7\frac{1}{4}$
owner. Sir G. Macpherson Grant.

A REMARKABLE DROPPED ANTLER WITH UNUSUAL NUMBER OF POINTS

been a pair of horns of the same buck it would be quite as remarkable as the great Lissadell head, for the single horn is splendid in every other respect besides the extraordinary number of points. It was found in the woods near Ballindalloch, and the owner noticed it one day when paying a visit to one of his crofters.

3. *Altyre House, Forres* (Sir William Gordon-Cumming).—Apart from the Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming collection, there are several first-class heads that have been shot of late years by the owner and his friends; but having no sketch of any exceptional Altyre head now in that house, I give the portrait of a very fine typical specimen in my own collection. It was killed on that estate in 1889 (p. 209).

4. *Forres House* (Colonel Gordon-Cumming).—There are only about half-a-dozen heads

¹ The left point has been broken off and another put on. This head cannot therefore be considered a perfect one.

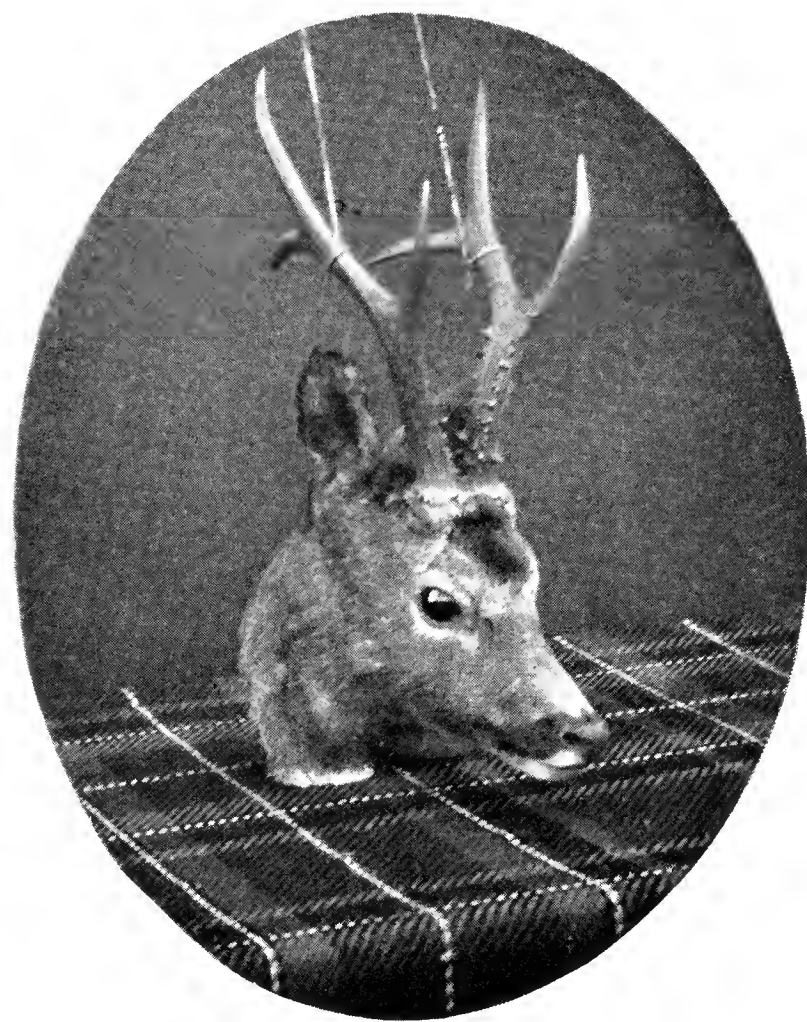
altogether in the owner's smoking-room, but all are good, and two in particular, one a very rough head of $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches and the splendid 11-inch head (figured). These two are as fine examples of Scotch roe as one could see anywhere.

5. *Moniack Castle* (Mr. J. Cameron).—This is decidedly a good, though small collection, the heads all having been obtained on the estate by Mr. Cameron's two sons. There is one beautiful long pair of horns of $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and another massive rough example with good heavy brows shot by Mr. Cameron's youngest boy in 1891.

6. *Dupplin Castle* (the Earl of Kinnoull).—On visiting Dupplin in 1895, I expected

to see some really good specimens, for this estate is practically in the centre of the very best roe country (for heads) in Scotland; but out of the seventy-eight in the house, there is not a single one which would even be called first class. In the heads from these grand woods the disparity of the two horns and their bad shape were most apparent, the only item of interest being a curious little dropped horn with three prongs of equal length.

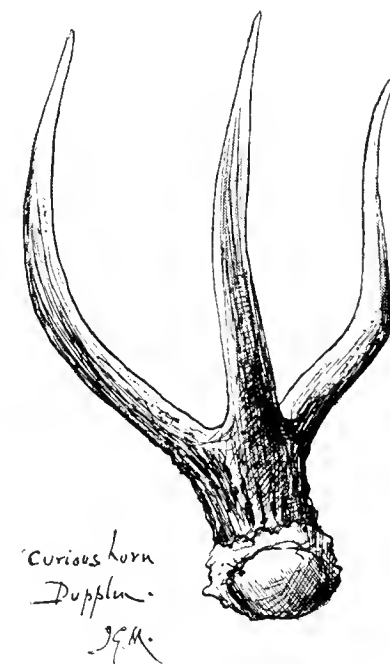
7. *Author's Collection*.—I have some fifty-five heads, most of which I have shot myself in different parts of Scotland. The individual shooter, however, even though he may kill a large number of roe, has little chance of obtaining many good heads in a lifetime, and perhaps never a first-class one. Luck has much to do with it, and I have but two of my own shooting which I can claim to be first class. A good roe's head has always had a great fascination for me, ever since I killed my first on Craigvinean when I was ten years old. During the years



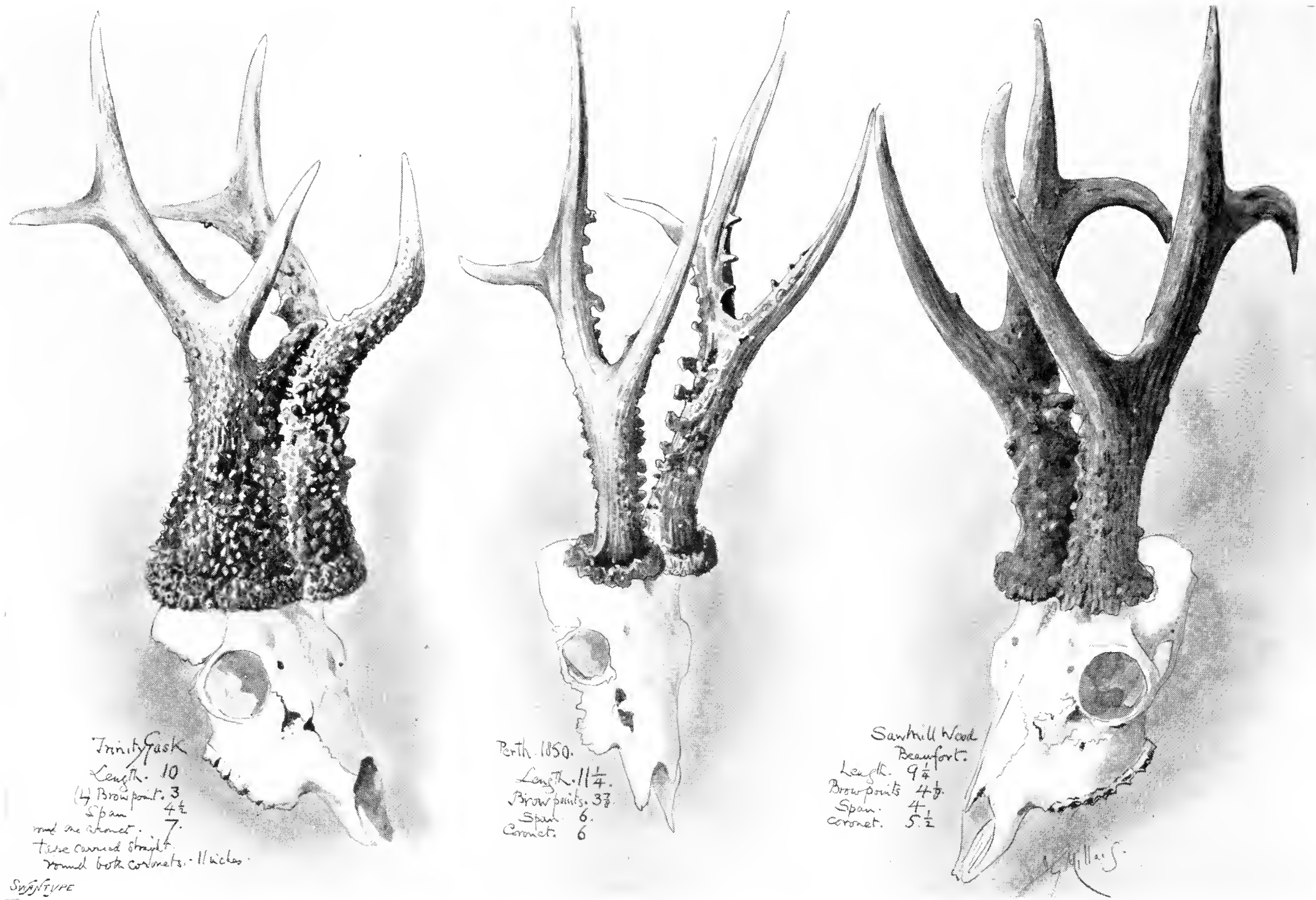
Shot by Colonel Gordon-Cumming at Auchintoul, Aberdeen. One of the few Scotch heads in existence of unusual length which are good in every other respect. Length, 11 inches; span, $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches; length of brow points, $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches.

I have been travelling and shooting in the North it has been my endeavour to get the best examples I could in each different district, as it is interesting to see the forms in which the very best heads display themselves under varying conditions of life. I have therefore now eight or nine heads which I have bought or acquired by exchange that are extraordinary. Three of these normal heads are, without prejudice, equal to the best Scotch roe that exist. My collection also includes a thick head with 10 points which was killed by a poacher near Stanley in 1886.

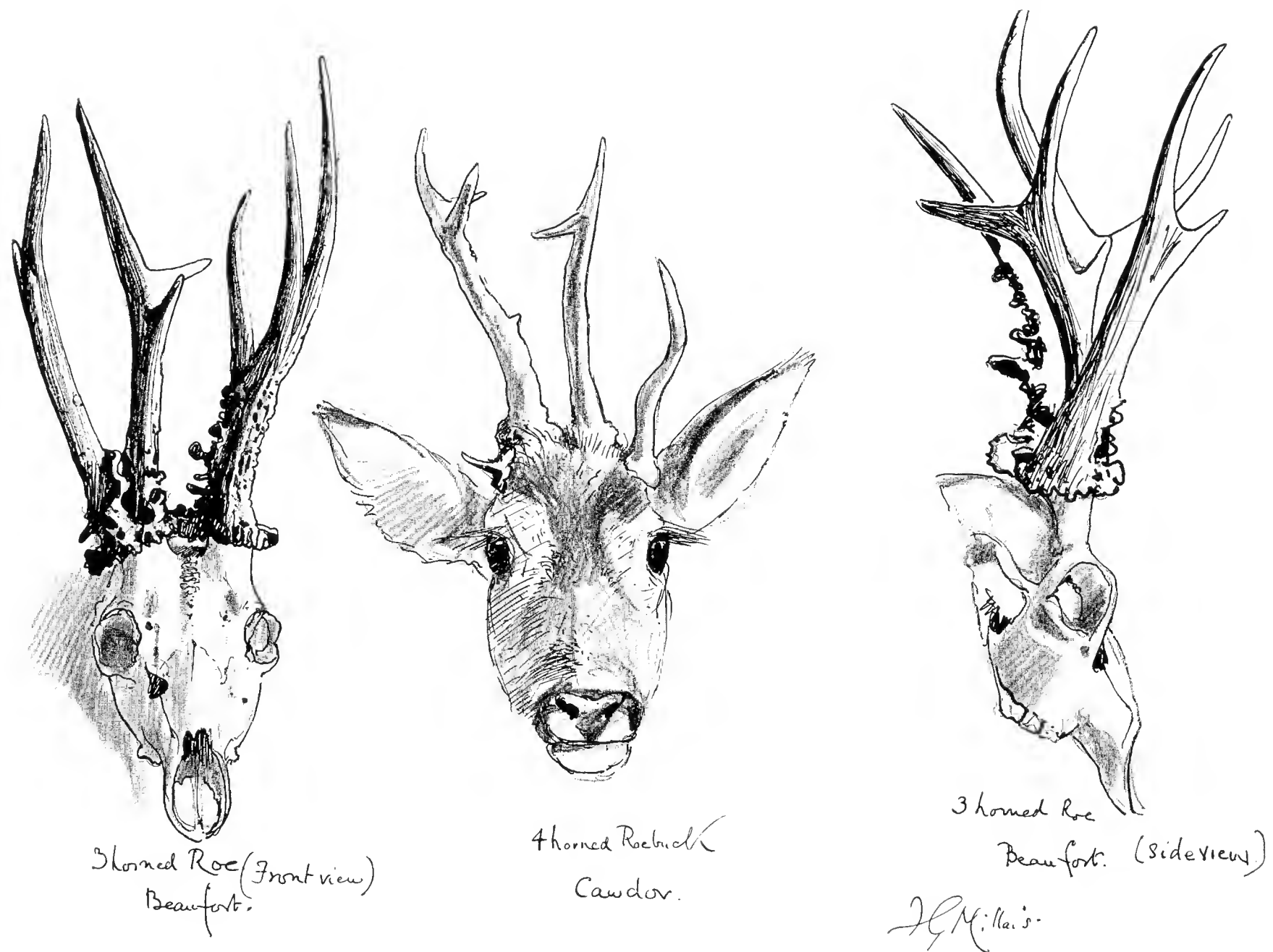
Of the three normal heads some may admire one and some another, for they are as different as they can be, and each perfect in its own way. The one in the centre of the illustration is an old head, and was killed in a wire fence near Perth some fifty years ago. The example on the right was shot by Mr. J. Corballis in Sawmill Wood, Beaufort, and I obtained it from him. It is a perfect head and the brows are extraordinary. The late Lord Lovat, who was present



Curious horn
Dupplin
1895



THREE BEST NORMAL HEADS (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION)



A THREE-HORNED AND A FOUR-HORNED ROEBUCK (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION AND BRITISH MUSEUM)

when Mr. Corballis shot it, and who had probably seen as many roe bagged as any single shooter of his day, said it was the best example of Scotch roe he had ever seen. That on the left lived in the Strathallan and Trinity-Gask woods (Perthshire) for several years. My two uncles had Trinity-Gask at this time, and I saw the roe one day cross the ride where I was posted, but, alas! too far out. My father, however, got a shot at him in the next beat, and he was not seen again alive. Mr. P. D. Malloch, later in the same year, obtained the head from the keeper and kindly presented it to me. He says it is the best that ever passed through his hands. Its chief beauty is its thickness and pearly roughness, which extends right up the horns.

I have also the best three-horned roebuck that I have seen. Heads with three coronets are not rare, but as a rule the third horn is merely a snag or thin spire. In this

case all three horns are well developed, though one lacks the third point. It was found by Johnny Ross at Beaufort. There is another head too that is worthy of notice from the unusual size of the coronets and long brow points. Round each coronet, $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches; tape taken straight round both coronets, 11 inches; brow points, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. It was given to me by Dr. Ogilvie Grant of Inverness, and was shot near that town.

Though the feeding is so good at Cawdor, and there are so many roe, a good head is seldom obtained. The best normal head in the Castle was shot by Lord Emlyn in 1895; it is a good strong head of 9 inches with a 6-inch span. Several three-horned examples have been killed at Cawdor, one of which is in the British Museum, but the most remarkable specimen ever obtained there was a buck which carried no less than four distinct coronets with horns on them (see p. 219). It is the only British example of such an abnormality

that I know of, but there are several German heads of that description. I examined this head just after it was skinned, and it certainly looked far better on the skull than it now does as a stuffed specimen in the British Museum, for the hair almost hides one of the coronets and its little horn.

One of the most curious things that strikes the sportsman and traveller is that three houses—Beaufort Castle, Blair Castle, and Scone Palace—have no collections of roe to speak of, particularly so as their past and present owners had every opportunity of making splendid ones had they wished to. All three contain just a few very ordinary heads, though each has one exception. The Duke's smoking-room at Blair contains a very thick but short specimen that was killed by a retriever at Strathord five or six years ago, and in Scone Palace there is one splendid head of 11 inches, which would be perfect were the horns not so close together.



12-Pointer in the possession of Mr. H. M. Warrand

Mr. C. M. P. Burn sent me a photo of his best heads some time ago, and amongst them is a very fine 8-pointer with forked brows—a very rare type.

The best head killed in 1896 was certainly an extraordinary one as far as size went, but one horn, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, was much bigger than the other, and the shape was poor. It was shot by a poacher in Darnaway. Snowie kindly sent it to me to look at. The same year Mr. H. M. Warrand killed an 11-inch head in Ross-shire, of which he kindly sent me a photo, but beyond its unusual length it was not good in any other respect.

The only Scotch 12-point roe head I have seen is now in the possession of Mr. Warrand, and I was lucky enough to examine and sketch it just as this work was going to press. Such a number of points is indeed remarkable, and I doubt if there is another such example in Scotland. All the points, though small, are *genuine points*, capable of fulfilling the old powder-horn test. They are not in any way connected with excrescences of the roughings, which are sometimes erroneously counted as points. The history of this remarkable head is roughly as follows. It was killed by a poacher in the Gaick and Stillenham woods, just above the factor's house on the estate of Ardross. The keeper, however, caught the sinner *in flagrante delicto*, and inflicted no other punishment beyond seizing the carcass. The head has passed into the possession of the late Mr. Maclean, for many years factor of Ardross, and latterly, after remaining some time in the widow's hands, it has been obtained by Mr. Hugh Warrand, who has kindly furnished me with these details.¹

A curious roe head (figured) with a double coronet on the left horn was shot by Mr. George Inglis at Newmore in Ross-shire in 1896. The upper coronet is said to be the true one, whilst the lower, which is very large, seems to surround the pedicle and lie flat on the skull.

It is very remarkable how, in the case of roe, any *injury* to the testicles seems to affect the surface of the horns rather than the beam of the horn itself. An additional amount of blood and osseous matter goes on travelling in a sort of chronic state from the pedicles till long after such a flow should have ceased. The result is, when the injury is rather severe, to produce great HEAVY horns, over which the roughings, which, as a rule, only are seen up to a certain point, extend right to the very tips of the points. These are commonly called perruque heads; but I think that it is erroneous to class these solid-beamed heads with

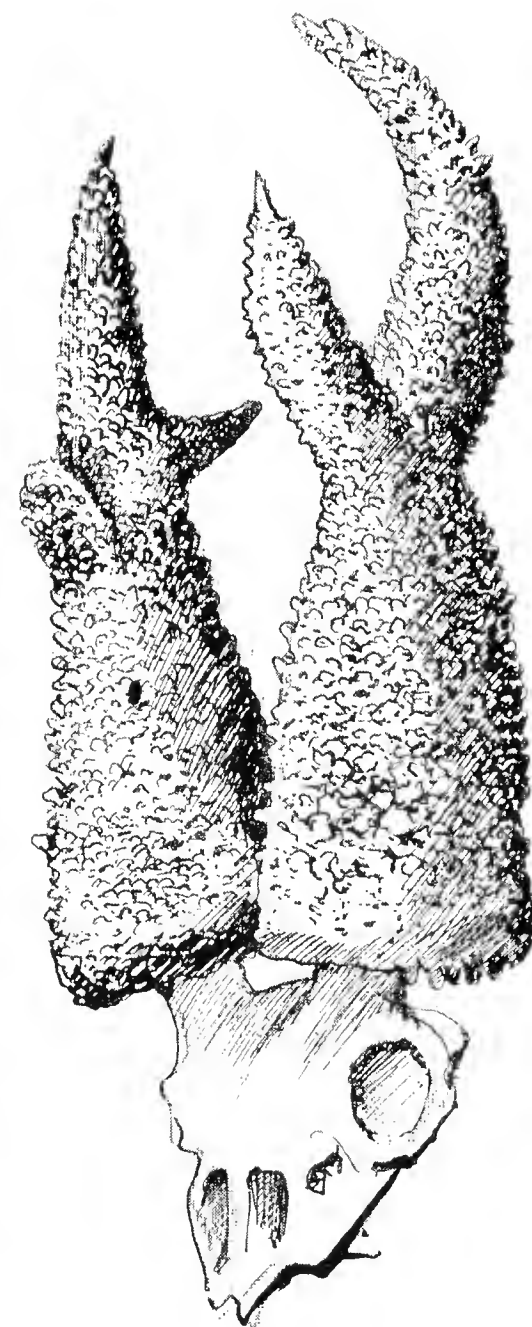
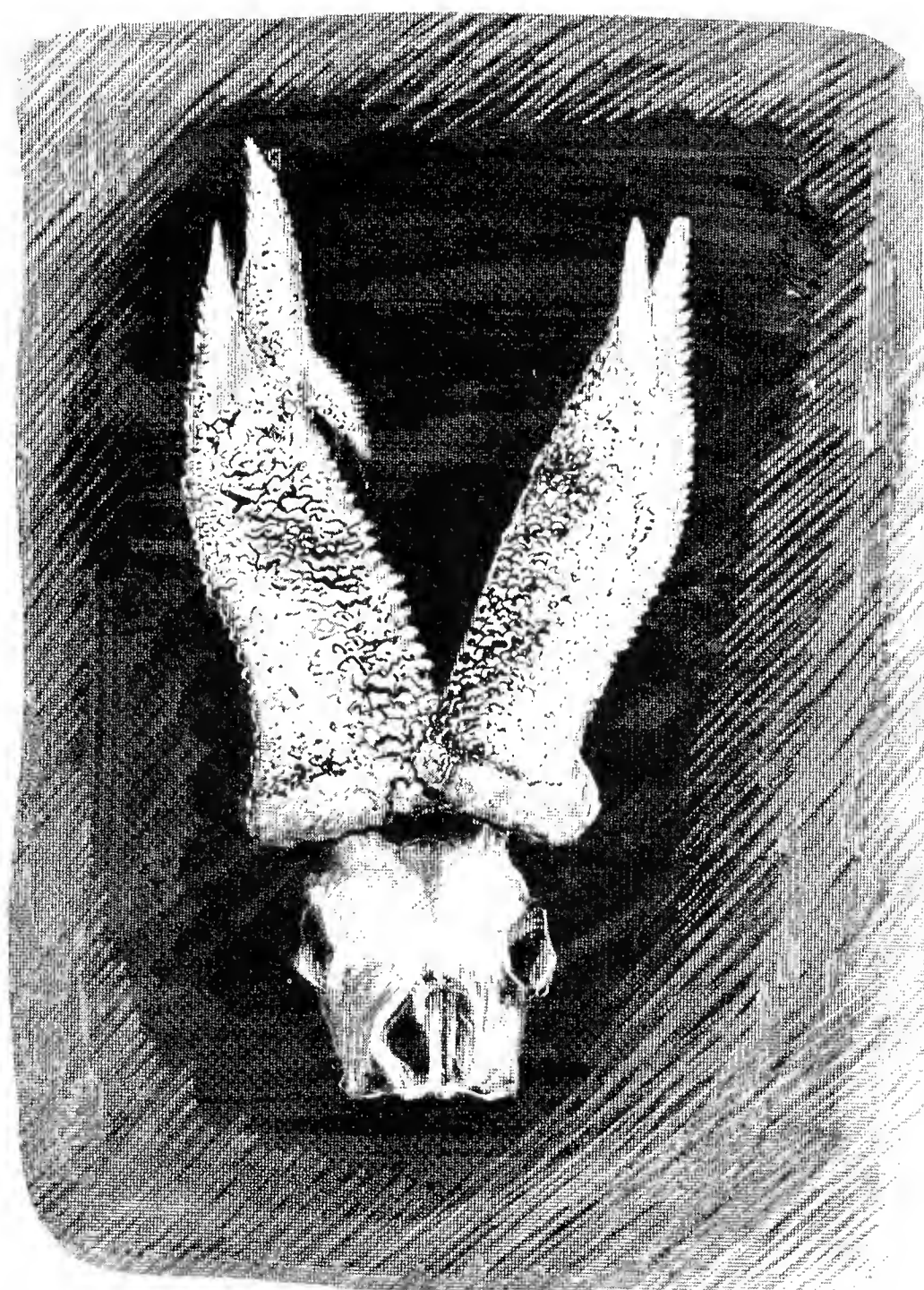


ROE WITH EXTRA CORONET ON THE LEFT HORN

¹ A head in the possession of Ross, the head stalker at Amot, was *said* to have had 12 points, but having been seen and examined by two friends in whose judgment I can place entire confidence, there is no doubt the number of points is exaggerated; some of the roughings have been counted by mistake.

perruque heads proper, such as we see in the stag's head on p. 107, for that growth, which is spongy, light, and of no solidity, is the result of *completely emasculating* an adult male deer and practically destroying his sex.

Many of my readers are doubtless aware that when a calf is cut he will grow no horns, but it is perhaps not generally known that when an adult deer is operated upon at the time he is about to grow fresh horns, the forces of nature are not *absolutely* killed, and the pedicles



found dead in Darnaway, Moray, 1890.
coll. of the late C. Macpherson Grant.

Scotland. British Museum.
pres. by Lord Willoughby de Eresby.

R. Millais.

SO-CALLED PERRUQUE HEADS, SCOTLAND

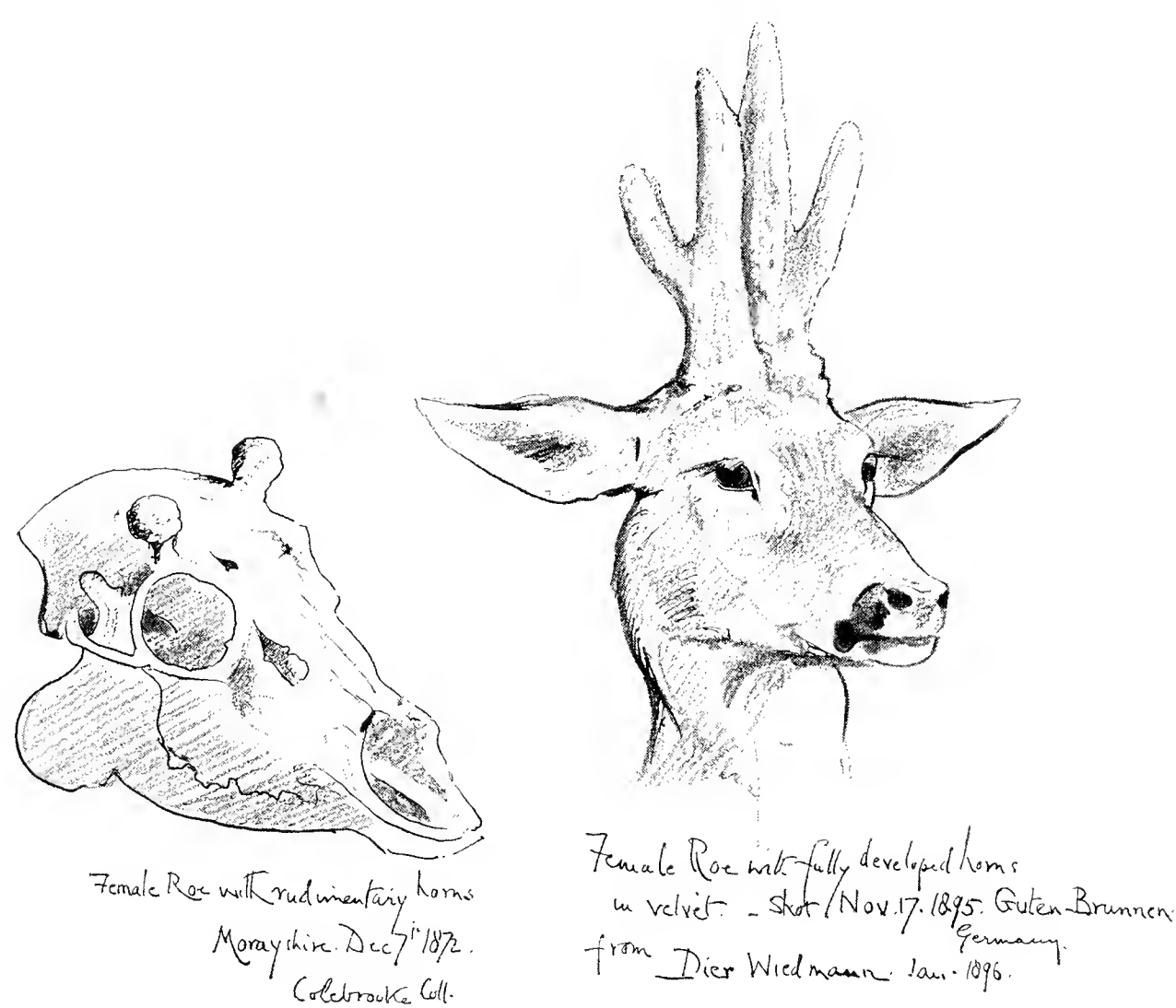
throw out the light puffy mass with a velvet covering, as seen on the right horn of the Colebrook stag on p. 107. This would very slowly but eventually peel, and we then have the complete head of a real perruque stag.

These real perruque heads are extremely rare, and can scarcely exist except as the result of artificial production. The real question of interest to naturalists, however, is this: Why should the effect of an injury to the generative organs so often create *additional* horn-growth, especially on the surface in the case of *roe*, when we know that *wild stags* in any way injured in the testicles rather show weakness and abnormality on the side on which the injury has taken place? Doubtless the heads of roe are sometimes affected in the same way as the stags—

that is to say, showing thin, crooked, and malformed heads ; but why do we never see a wild stag with a great solid heavy-mossed head like the two roe figured on p. 222 ? Perhaps the answer is that stags, never being fired at with shot-guns, are never injured in *exactly* the manner which would produce this horn-superfluity.

It is not very rare to see female roe with pedicles and rudimentary antlers, but it is very unusual to find the horns fully developed and rubbed clean. Mr. J. E. Harting mentions two having occurred in Scotland, but does not state whether the horns were fully developed or not. One such example, however, was killed a few years ago at Petworth Park in Sussex, and the skull is now in the Royal College of Surgeons.

I give a picture of a skull with little horns now in Sir Douglas Brooke's collection at Colebrooke ; it was killed in Morayshire on 7th December 1872, and I have also copied beside



FEMALE ROE WITH HORNS

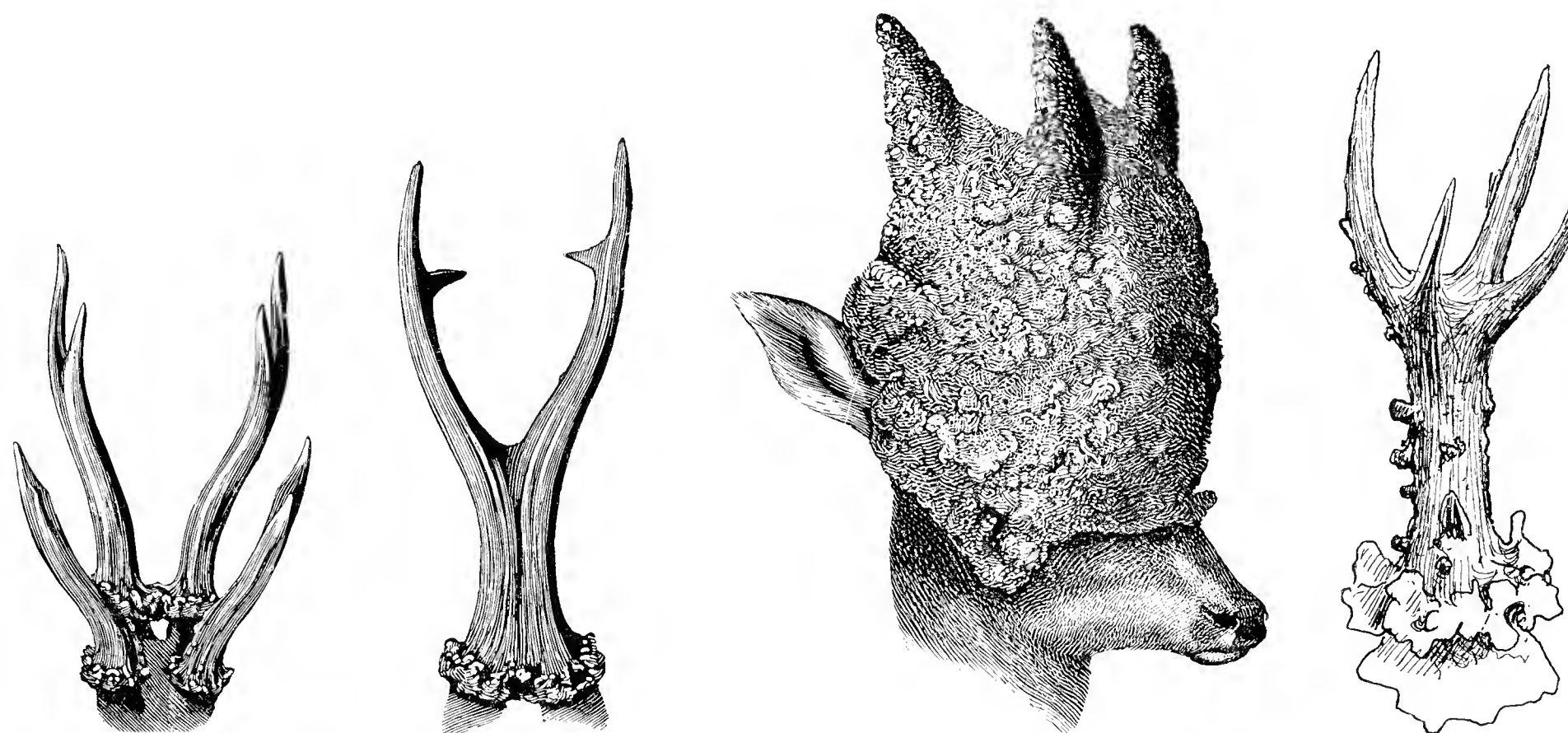
it the figure of a head in velvet which appeared in *Der Weidmann* for 10th January 1896. This is a good example, and the horns were well developed and perfectly hard when shot on 17th November 1895 by Mr. Alfred Bourcart at Guten-Brunnen in Germany. The editor of that paper considers that this animal was probably a hermaphrodite, but I quite agree with Mr. J. E. Harting, who furnished some notes on this head to the *Field* (8th February 1896), that it was only a female exhibiting male attributes in the shape of horns.

In March 1896 there also appeared an interesting note in the *Field* by Mr. R. Zeitler, writing from Munich, in which, besides recording cases of female roe with horns, he gives the following information :—

It need not be assumed that female roe deer with antlers are either hermaphrodite or barren. On the contrary, it has been proved in many cases that does with horns were prolific and dropped fawns. Mr. Grashey, who has in the press a work dealing with this subject, shot a doe with horns, which in the rutting time came to his call like a buck, and which was consequently mistaken for one. This animal had had a fawn and had given suck.

Female birds also occasionally assume the male plumage and lay eggs that are perfectly fertile.

And now perhaps, gentle reader, you will think that I have "bucked" enough for one day, for the comprehensive naturalist must look upon our deer and their horns as but poor things; but then, after all, they are our own! And he is a feeble patriot indeed who does not think his own creatures and forms of the chase the best. At any rate, the annual "trek" to the North is a proof of the popularity of deer-stalking; and as for the study of heads, well, I have only striven to impart some of the love of beautiful things which I feel myself for the glories of nature. To all true sportsmen that expenditure of "gas" about



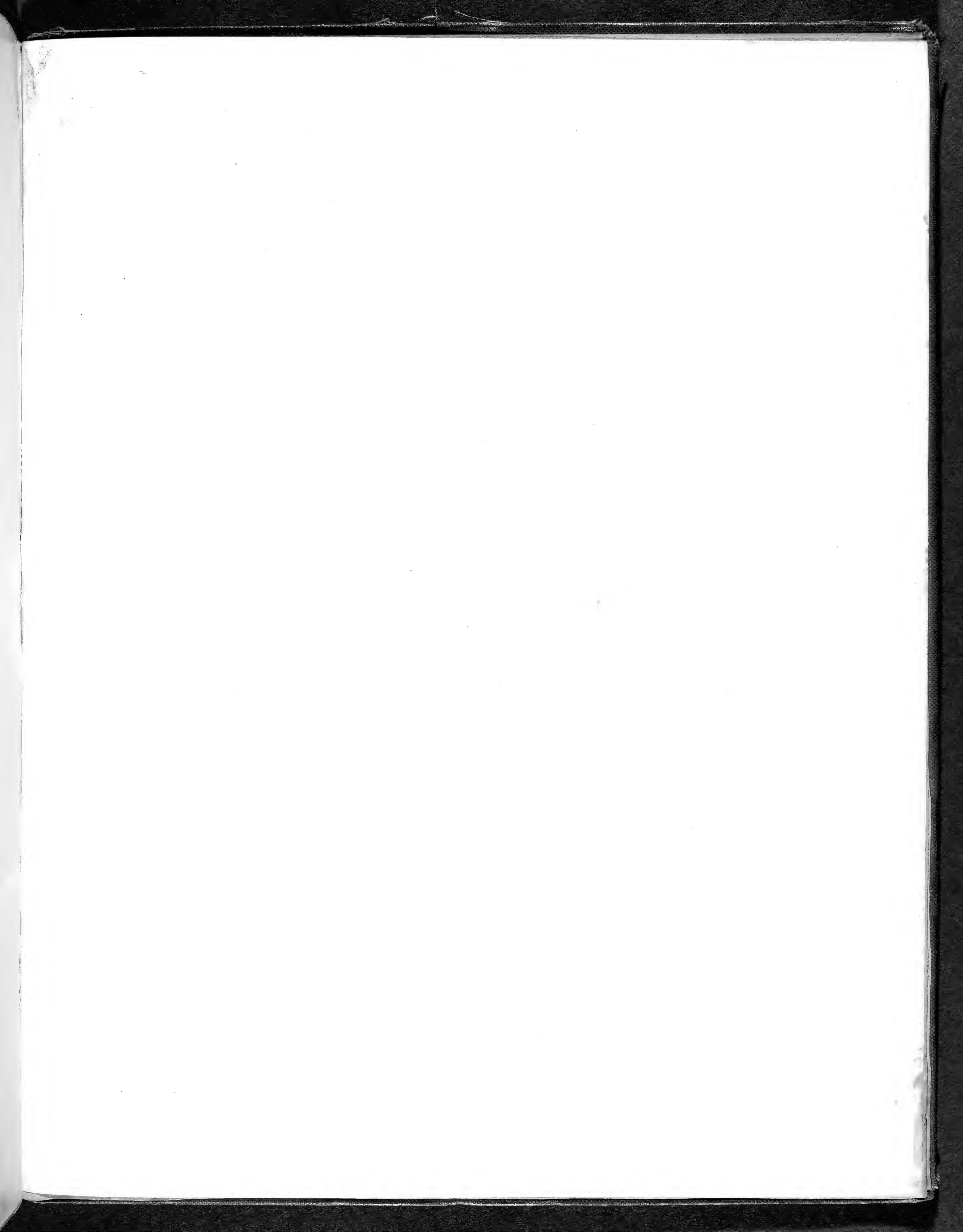
SOME REMARKABLE ABNORMAL GERMAN HEADS

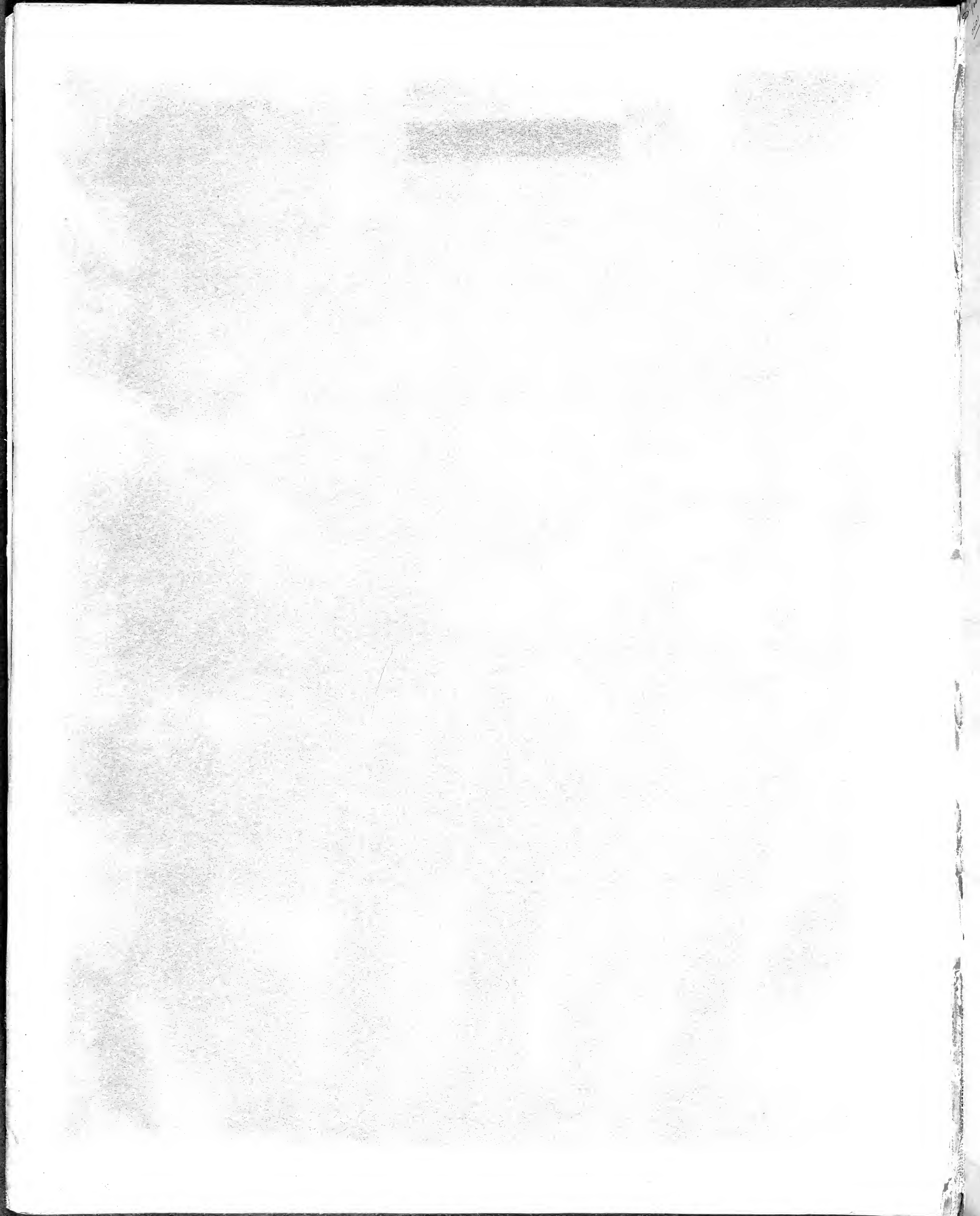
The head with two pairs of horns and the coalesced head on the left were originally in the collection of Colonel Geoffrey Von Klipstein, but are now in England. The coalesced head on the right is in the Munich Museum. The complete head in the centre is an extraordinary monstrosity; the horny substance has exuded over the top of the head and covered the face like a mask, though the animal could see with one eye. It was alive when secured by H.R.H. Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia at Potsdam in December 1872 (from *Furst Zoologie*, p. 365).

"records," unaccompanied by true appreciation of beauty, is both hateful and vulgar, and I should be more than sorry if anything in this work should arouse any possible contention. There is an old Gaelic toast given in Highland regiments which seems to me a fitting conclusion. It is as follows :—

Here's a health to our Queen (God bless her!) and the lads wi' the kilt, and a health to the land o' the hills and the heather, where the hungry are fed and the wild deer find shelter.

THE END





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